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Two Ways to Wedlock.

TWO WAYS TO WEDLOCK.

A Novellette.

(REPRINTED FROM THE NEW YORK HOME JOURNAL.)

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TO

GENERAL GEORGE P. MORRIS.

"Look into thy heart, and write," has become the watchword of to-day. But you have searched, not your own heart alone, but the deep heart of our universal humanity; not with a harsh touch to bring its foibles to light, but with a generous hand, to aid every aspiration towards the beautiful and the true, and to raise the longing soul to those realms of light and song, where your genial spirit finds its native home.

So have you guided me towards that sunny land; and though my weak hand may not reach the radiant blooms, meet for a poet's brow, let me lay at your feet this tribute flower, in grateful memory of enduring friendship.

New York, 1859.

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TWO WAYS TO WEDLOCK.

CHAPTER I.

A HOUSEHOLD AND A HOME.

"We sow the glebe, we reap the corn,
We build the house where we may rest;
And then at moments, suddenly,
We look up to the great wide sky,
Inquiring wherefore we were born—
For earnest, or for jest."—E. B. BROWNING.

"MR. LYNDSAY," began his wife, "do put down that paper for a moment and listen to me. One month from to-day is Julia's birthday, and I have promised her a fancy dress ball." He may as well know all at once, she added, mentally; one shock is more easily borne than half a dozen.

Mr. Lyndsay laid down his paper to attempt a remonstrance.

"But, my dear, will not the ball do without the fancy dresses? It will be too conspicuous; people will talk so much about it."

"That is just what I want," said she, boldly. "Julia is to come out, and I wish everything to be as brilliant as possible. It is always an advantage to a girl to make her *début* in style. Julia's Greek dress is exceedingly becoming."

"Even the dresses made," he muttered; "what use is it for me to say anything?" but raising his voice, he added, "what advantage, Matilda, can there be to a young girl, in having her name on every one's lip; her appearance criticised as if she were an opera dancer? I think the less a young lady is talked about, the better."

"How those old time notions cling to one!" exclaimed his wife, impatiently; "don't you see girls marry well, and obtain excellent settlements, just because they have the name of being fashionable, or stylish, or dashing, when

others, far more beautiful, and even more wealthy, remain single, or marry some steady-going nobody, because they have not been heard of properly?"

"No doubt these last marriages you speak of are the happiest. Those young men about town, sons of rich families, have generally few qualifications for domestic life. Look at ——"

"Well, well," interrupted Mrs. Lyndsay, hastily, "we are leaving the subject. Julia is not going to be married yet, nor Matilda, either; but I must be ready for this ball. The whole house will be opened, so I must refurnish the parlors and the morning-room."

"I cannot afford it this year," said Mr. Lyndsay.

"Oh, yes, you can. I do not want anything extravagant. Mrs. Selden has given one thousand dollars a window for her new curtains, and I am sure I can get as showy ones for five hundred dollars. We can save in other ways; but my house must look as well as those I visit at."

"Money is getting scarce, and I do not like to mortgage."

"That is always the way. If you financial men are to be believed, there is a crisis at least once a month; but I cannot help it. Give me two thousand dollars in ready money, and you can give notes for the rest. All this helps your credit, too," she added, insinuatingly; "we must keep up a certain style and appearance, or people will say we are going down."

"Perhaps we are," was Mr. Lyndsay's inward comment; but he said no more, for he well knew that his wife's determinations were like "the laws of the Medes and Persians," as far as he was concerned. His hints of prudence were called croaking; his anxiety to lessen the expenditure for mere show, was stigmatized as meanness and want of spirit. And he was finally silenced by being told that gentlemen never knew anything about household matters; that his wife did not expend nearly as much as Mrs. A. B. or C.; and that she would not have her children excluded from

society, and from all chance of a good settlement, by any ill-judged parsimony.

"Mamma, mamma," called a voice from the head of the stairs, "cousin Oscar has come, and we are ready for your list."

Mrs. Lyndsay was not sorry for the interruption; she thought she had said enough for the present. She could not hope to make her husband agree with her; she was satisfied if he did not thwart her: and when she left him he sat for long hours in bitter reverie.

Of those who reach middle life how few there are whose retrospective glance falls not first on the grave of some buried hope. Mr. Lyndsay's hope had pointed to a happy home —such a home as he could remember in his childhood—the abode of trustful love, where happy faces gathered round the bright hearth, where the heart might find an ark, closed in securely, from the wild waves of worldly strife.

He remembered the sudden alteration of manner, the courteous invitations, the graceful deference to his opinions, the smiles and glances

lavished upon him, when a rapid rise in city property had elevated him from the legatee of a small out-of-town farm to one of the richest men in New York. Despising the falseness and unreality of fashionable society, he still fancied he could detect in some hearts true and warm feelings; and the bright eyes and sweet voice of Matilda Sumner so enslaved him that he forgot to scrutinize, and believed that the lovely exterior was the true index of as lovely a soul.

Bitter had been his disappointment, when the truth was gradually forced upon him, that his fair wife lived only in and for the world—that she valued his wealth and position, appreciated her acquired consequence as the wife of a millionaire, loved to exhibit the most tastefully furnished house, to give the most perfect entertainments; but as little understood what should constitute a true home as she valued the true heart that so vainly sought a resting-place.

And then, far away, he saw as in a vision

the scenes of his happy childhood—the low rolling pastures; the now distant hills rounding up against the golden sunset sky; the beautiful Mohawk, with the little island where he had built his fishing hut; the chestnut-tree where he had shaken down the burs, and the bright little face that watched him so anxiously, as he climbed higher and higher. Then the day of the spring freshet, the broken bridge, the eddy by the alder thicket, where sunny curls gleamed through the dark water; and once again, in memory, tears fell above the little grave far away on the hillside by the Mohawk.

In the parlor the merry council discussed people and names, and speculated on character and costume.

"Mamma," said Matilda, "don't admit any except fancy dresses; it will make the rooms look so brilliant."

"That is impossible, my dear; it would exclude many of our best people. There are numbers of our acquaintances who would not venture to wear fancy dresses."

"We are quite ready to venture," said Matilda, laughing, "and of course, Oscar, we can count upon you and all the girls."

"I am not quite certain," answered Oscar. "I am at your service, if you want me, and probably Helen and Milly; but I do not think that Marion and Cornelia will wear costumes."

"Why not, does Aunt Amy object to it?"

"She left it to themselves to decide, I believe, and they preferred to appear as spectators."

"I suppose they are too dignified, and consider it childish to 'dress up,'" exclaimed Matilda; "but married ladies do it, and even Mrs. Smith, who must be near fifty, went to Mrs. Selden's last year as Queen Elizabeth, and she looked splendid in her coronet of diamonds."

"The diamonds might perhaps be splendid; not Mrs. Smith!"

"Oh, you know dress makes any one look well. I wish I could decide about mine. I am so vexed that it rains to-night; I wanted Marion to help me. And Kate Selden and

Mary Lester were to be here, too and rehearse some of our *tableaux*."

"*Tableaux!*" said Oscar, "who is to perform?"

"Nearly all who wear fancy dresses, so there will be no changing of dresses; and when they are over the ball will go on without delay. We have four *tableaux* selected. Julia will be the Bride of Abydos. I wish I could decide."

"Why don't you take that one from 'Lalla Rookh?'" said Julia, "you liked the dress so much."

"It will not do; I am not dark enough."

"Oh, Oscar," said Julia, "then do persuade Cornelia to appear; she has such magnificent black hair. If she will we will engage Captain Vernon to play the hero: it would make a splendid *tableau*."

"The same Captain Vernon who distinguished himself so highly on the frontier last season?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Lyndsay; "and he would be a capital match for Cornelia. He is heir to

a considerable property on the death of some old uncle or cousin. I know he admires her very much, and if she would only play him off a little she could make a decided conquest."

"I trust I shall never see my sisters degrade themselves by seeking conquests," said Oscar, rather proudly.

A slight flush tinged Mrs. Lyndsay's cheek as she replied, "Of course I do not mean anything forward, only a little justifiable coquetry, which is natural to all women; after all, she is not your sister."

"She is the same to me," he answered, "and there is nothing of the coquette about her."

"Well, never mind," said Matilda, "don't tell her all this; but try to enlist her for the *tableaux*."

"I should not be a very warm advocate, and you had better plead your own cause, when they come to-morrow to help you. But I will give them your messages."

"Now for the invitations," said Julia. "Mam-

ma, where is your list? Here, Oscar, this is a beautiful pen."

This important business proceeded rapidly, and as the party were in high spirits they commented jestingly on the various names read aloud by Mrs. Lyndsay.

"Mrs. Bradshaw and family. One large loaf and four small ones. Very light baked and very heavy, with their pale hair and colorless eyes."

"Mr. and Mrs. Douglass."

"Mrs. Douglass is like a huge poppy, in her green velvet dress and scarlet turban. She always puts me to sleep."

"Poor Mr. Douglass looks as if the influence had superinduced a chronic state of somnolency, and he will never wake up again perfectly as long as he lives."

"Do, Oscar, add a few more long words. If you were to repeat all that to him with a grave face, he would say, 'Just so, my dear sir; you have described my case exactly!'"

"Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow. How faded she is,"

said Mrs. Lyndsay. "I remember her a brilliant-looking girl."

"Faded, indeed," echoed Matilda; "all color washed out with weeping for her lost beauty."

A few more names passed without comment; the pile of notes grew under the hands of the busy writers.

"Colonel Baron Gaspard de Brie," read Mrs. Lyndsay, with a little elevation of voice.

"Aunt Lyndsay," exclaimed Oscar, "you are not going to invite him!"

"Why should I not? He will be a great acquisition."

"He is very dissipated, aunt; he frequents gambling saloons, and is the companion of the fastest men about town."

"We have nothing to do with his companions or amusements, Oscar; he is a perfect gentleman."

"I do not consider any man a gentleman whose moral conduct is so very objectionable," persisted Oscar.

"But foreigners have a very different code

from ours," returned Mrs. Lyndsay. "His manners are remarkably polished, he is a distinguished officer, a baron, and brought, they say, excellent introductory letters. The Puritan leaven works still in our opinions, Oscar, in this country."

"I hope it long may, ma'am. I think we can hardly be too strict in some matters."

"In what, for instance?" asked his aunt.

"The introduction to our young ladies of distinguished foreigners, about whom we can know very little, except that their code of morals is very different from our own," answered Oscar, with a glance at Matilda.

Matilda answered the look. "You are very prejudiced, Oscar; you must wear that off in your travels; you will be charmed with the baron, when you see him."

"Would you like me to resemble him? to improve myself by such a distinguished model?"

"You are not quite perfect yet," she answered, with a little laugh and look that at once dis-

pelled all his feelings of annoyance. But the baron was invited.

"Oscar," said Julia, "you must look your very best, and make your last appearance as creditable as possible. I suppose you will attend no more parties before you sail. Are you not glad to go?"

"Glad and sorry," said he. "I can hardly realize that I am going away for two years. I have always longed to travel; yet, now that my wish is attained, my mind dwells less on the pleasure I anticipate than on the changes that may happen before I return."

"That is only because you are out of health. It always makes people apprehensive and very nervous."

"I am willing to hope so," said he, smiling, "although ladies are usually considered to be the only persons privileged to be nervous. Now, girls, have we finished?"

The list was compared and found correct, and, with many thanks from his cousins, Oscar departed. His walk home was not particularly

agreeable. A new direction had been given to his apprehensions of change. He called his fears absurd, ridiculous, repeated that a party acquaintance is nothing after all, and finished by recurring to his first thought, "Why will aunt Lyndsay invite that baron?"

Matilda was but eighteen; fond of company, and naturally pleased by the admiration excited by her beauty. Mrs. Lyndsay did not disapprove of the partial engagement that existed between her daughter and Oscar; but she was worldly in the extreme, and would leave no means untried to secure for her children wealth or position, which constituted all she knew of happiness. What was to be the end? Were the good and evil qualities so balanced in Matilda's character, that her mother's influence would turn the scale? Would she forget him? or worse, remembering, would she deliberately choose falsehood for truth?—show for happiness?

Oscar was glad to turn away from perplexities that he could not solve, as he entered his own home.

Dr. Sumner was a physician in good practice, and in mind, character, and opinions, presented a remarkable contrast to his half-sister, Mrs. Lyndsay. His own mother dying when he was an infant, he was left to the care of her relations, for several years, till, at last, his father came to bring him home to greet a new mother. Unhappily she was a vain, frivolous woman, and her jealousy of her step-son, and of the place he held in his father's affection, soon grew into positive dislike. But though she succeeded in removing the son from his father's roof—first to school, and afterwards in the prosecution of his medical studies—she could not shake their mutual attachment, which even seemed to deepen on the father's part, as he had increasing reason to repent his injudicious marriage.

The only child by this second marriage, while she inherited a considerable portion of her father's decicion of character, also exhibited her mother's ambition and coldness of heart. And the continual lessons of worldly wisdom,

carefully instilled from childhood, found no counteracting force in the spirit of Matilda Sumner.

Dr. Sumner was fortunate in finding a wife whose principles and tastes agreed with his own; and when, after the death of his parents, he received his sister into his happy home, it was with the sincere hope that, her heart being softened by sorrow, she might feel that there was, even on *earth*, a happiness more real than any she had yet imagined. But though she could not help feeling respect, and even regard, for her brother and his wife, she could not be won to perceive any charm in domestic happiness that could supply the place of the glitter, to which her eyes were accustomed; and if her brother's hopes revived for a time, on her marriage with Mr. Lyndsay, he was at last almost convinced of the real truth, that she was incapable of feeling anything like genuine affection.

Mr. Lyndsay was not a man of strong character; but he had high principle, refined taste,

placid temper, and deep, keen feelings; qualities which soon won the friendship of his brother-in-law, while they were unvalued, even unperceived, by his beautiful, fashionable bride.

We have taken a peep at the household of the Lyndsays. Dr. and Mrs. Sumner had one son and two daughters, and had also adopted, some years before our story opens, two orphan girls, Cornelia and Melicent Boylston.

As Oscar entered the parlor on his return home, he exclaimed, involuntarily, "How happy you all look!"

"So we are," said Helen. "Were we very much missed?"

"Do you want me to say yes or no? It would be a pity to disturb your serenity. Julia was very curious to know what characters you would take."

"Our own; we do not wear fancy dresses. Mother gave us our choice, and we decided we had better not."

"A most sapient decision: how will you be

able to make yourselves pretty enough, without spangles and feathers, and Turkish jackets ?"

"Handsome is that handsome does," answered Milly; "we are certain, therefore, to look pretty."

"Have you a good mark to-day, Mischief? Where's Cornelia? I have a message for her."

"Very far off, just now, by the look of her eyes; her outward presence is in the next room, by the table. Nela, does it rain in Spain ?"

Cornelia laid down her book, when she heard herself called, and laughing at Milly's look of pretended curiosity, joined the group by the fire.

"Nela, my question is already partly answered. Helen says you are not going to wear fancy dresses, while Julia especially desired you to appear in a *tableau* from Lalla Rookh. Is your decision irrevocable ?"

"Quite so, I believe."

"But Aunt Lyndsay offers, as a prime inducement, her assistance in a little match-making, on your behalf."

"I am very much obliged to her," said Nela, quietly.

"Oh, are you? Then I may tell her you accept her offer."

"Her kindness I accept, as it was meant; her offer is a very different affair. I must take leave to decline that. I don't think Aunt Lindsay and I should agree on the preliminaries."

"Do tell me what you consider the necessary preliminaries on the lady's part. It may be valuable information to me in the chess game of society."

"One learns best by experience, after being beaten in the game a few times," said Cornelia, laughing.

Busy, indeed, were the following weeks for the Lyndsays. Mrs. Lyndsay, having obtained her husband's reluctant consent to the refurnishing of the house, found that her calculation of expenses fell so far short of the actual outlay required, that even she could with difficulty silence all her scruples by the plea that it was for years to come, and a few dollars more or less could not make much difference.

But the memory of all annoyances was lost in the feeling of triumphant pride with which she surveyed the magnificent suite of apartments on the night of the ball. Her taste was good; color, light, and perfume, were skilfully employed, competition distanced by the perfect result.

The rooms filled rapidly, and the company were seated in front of the stage erected for the *tableaux*. The performers were assembled in another room, and at the close of each representation they came round and found places quietly among the spectators, no one appearing twice.

As Oscar entered the room, he could not at first find a seat, and stood for some minutes leaning against the door. Behind it two persons were conversing.

"Five hundred thousand at least, and there are but two daughters."

"Dat is more than two million francs. Ah!" he exclaimed, rapturously, as the curtain rose on a beautiful group from Schiller's Marie Stuart, "*les beaux yeux de Mlle. Mathilde!*"

"*Les beaux yeux de sa casette*," muttered Oscar, contemptuously, as he found his way into the room; yet the next moment ready to laugh at his own extreme vexation.

He could not be certain from absolute testimony that this man was a mere fortune-hunter; but his conviction was firm and unalterable. Perhaps his own attachment quickened his perception.

Marion and Cornelia sat together near the fire. The *tableaux* ended, and as the music began the darkened rooms were relighted. Cornelia raised her eyes to take a survey of the room, and met those of Captain Vernon fixed full on hers. He was leaning against the mantel, listening to some story a brother officer was relating, but there was a light in his eyes that seemed to send a flash to her inmost heart. She was glad that a question from Marion made her turn.

What is that strange instinct that tells us so surely that we are in the presence of one who can influence our fate for good or ill? Who has

not felt the sudden dread, and shrunk from eyes never seen before, yet felt to be evil; or the quick sympathy, the ineffable gladness, that as surely indicates the meeting of congenial spirits?

Circumstances may prevent any tangible result—may separate for ever such instinctive friends or foes, but the power is there.

When these two conversed together during the evening, they talked of passing topics as casual acquaintance. Did either feel that they were strangers?

So the "ball kept rolling;" and as waves of light and music flowed over the sands of time, if worthless stones glistened and shone in borrowed lustre, there were some pearls of happiness beneath the waters. Oscar found one, when "the beautiful eyes" filled with tears, as Matilda bade him good-bye; and the bright rose from her hair was treasured next his heart long after its hue of hope had faded.

CHAPTER II.

PARTING.

"My bark is out upon the sea,
The moon's above;
Her light a presence seems to me
Like woman's love.
My native land I've left behind,
Afar I roam;—
In other lands no hearts I'll find
Like those at home."—MORRIS.

IT was a severe trial to Dr. and Mrs. Sumner to part with their son. He had graduated high at college, and had nearly completed his studies preparatory to his admission to the bar, when he was threatened with that scourge of our northern climate, consumption.

Change of air and scene might avert the danger, if resorted to in season, and a voyage to Europe was decided on. Oscar's plan was to travel in France and Italy for a few months,

or to remain in Italy until his health was restored, before visiting the more northern countries. He was possessed of excellent abilities, temper, and principles; and while his good qualities lessened his parents' apprehensions, they caused his absence to be more deeply regretted.

When the family assembled to tea, the night before his departure, it was with a determination on the part of the younger members to make the evening pass cheerfully, if possible. The trunks were packed, and there was nothing more to be done. There was leisure to think of parting. In vain they tried to talk of other things; the effort was too evident, and after a forced question or two, they would become silent again. Mrs. Sumner looked sad and anxious, and scarcely seemed to hear anything that was said.

"This will never do," whispered one to the other; "if we cannot make mother laugh, we shall all get crying together."

At last finding it impossible to avoid the

subject that filled their minds, they began to talk about it; to mention the various places Oscar was to visit, and decide what was best worth his seeing. He professed to be able to bring home to each what they most desired, and asked his mother if he should bring her a part of the golden fleece, a branch of the apples of the Hesperides, or a stone from the ruins of Troy.

"Ah!" exclaimed Milly, springing into the centre of the room, and assuming a tragic attitude, "more cruel than Æneas. He left only Dido, but you leave no less than five inconsolable damsels." She then began to recite with exaggerated emphasis, and, Oscar following her lead, a spirited comedy was acted on the basis of profound tragedy; while Helen, taking her pencils, sketched a picture, representing Oscar standing with folded arms, on the stern of a vessel under full sail, and looking disdainfully at five female figures that stood, with dishevelled hair and outstretched arms, on the battlements of Castle Garden.

Their efforts were rewarded by a laugh from the mother, and this point once gained, they did not give her time to become depressed again. They were ably seconded by the doctor, who came home in the midst of the declamation; and all felt relieved when the hour for separating found them still in a state of cheerful excitement.

Oscar Sumner sailed next day, on that search wherein so many are disappointed—the search of health; and loving thoughts and prayers followed him across the wide ocean, and throughout his long pilgrimage.

Julia Lyndsay found all her anticipations fully realized at first. She was nearly as beautiful as Matilda, but so very different in every respect, that those who admired one could scarcely concede beauty to the other. Thus there was no rivalry between the sisters, and the elder felt no jealousy at the attentions lavished on the new *débutante*. Matilda Lyndsay possessed great tact, and considerable perception of character. She had no striking

talent except for music, in which she excelled; but she was ready in conversation, peculiarly graceful and dignified in manner, and, beneath a vast amount of natural indolence and fashionable indifference, concealed, almost from herself, powers of strong resolution and endurance. She liked the show and pleasure of the world, and her mother's advice and example fostered a spirit of worldly ambition that was gradually gaining ascendancy over her nobler, but undeveloped endowments.

Julia was energetic, mercurial, and warm-hearted; the latter quality being deemed rather inconvenient by Mrs. Lyndsay, who feared that it might interfere with her daughter's "settlement."

Under better training that daughter would have made a most valuable member of society, happy herself, and making others so. Under her mother's lessons she had every prospect of becoming a thorough flirt, from mere gayety of spirit, wasting in a round of dissipation qualities that would have made sunshine in her home.

Their cousins, "the Sumners," as they were generally called (though two only had any right to the name), cared less for general society; and though mixing somewhat in the Lyndsays' more dashing set, found greater pleasure in home, and their own circle of tried and valued friends.

Cornelia met Captain Vernon frequently, but always in mixed society, so that he had little opportunity of paying her special attention, though his interest in her evidently increased. There seemed a spell in his eyes that could always attract hers; a charm in her voice that drew him to her side. He was a man of extensive information, his taste was cultivated and naturally refined; while his rather retiring disposition prevented him from being considered brilliant in company, he was valued and appreciated by all who could look below the surface. To Cornelia, his conversation revealed a new world. While their tastes were remarkably similar, he had advantages which she could not as yet have attained, and he opened

vistas before her eyes that gleamed with radiance from realms of light and beauty of which she had scarcely dreamed.

Early acquired habits of self-control, acquired during grief and anxiety in her childhood, had subdued her manner, and concealed from persons the most marked characteristics of her mind. This quiet-looking girl, considered even commonplace by many, was an ardent enthusiast, passionately loving all things beautiful, quick, sensitive, sympathetic, and capable of the loftiest heroism, the most intense devotion.

Towards the close of the winter, Cornelia received a letter from an old school friend who had returned home to Virginia, and now wrote to demand the fulfilment of a promise, to be her bridesmaid. This was an imperative call; and Cornelia, having accepted it, had been gone about ten days when Captain Vernon received orders to start for the far West.

The summons to leave the city, and the deep regret he experienced, enlightened him as to the nature of his feelings towards Miss Boyls-

ton; and his perplexity was at least equal to his regret. It was impossible for him to marry. His mother, who had for years been in infirm health, was dependent upon him for all the comforts of life—her own property barely sufficing for mere subsistence; and the allowance he had made her was so large in proportion to his income as to leave him only sufficient for his expenses.

The question now was, should he go without expressing his sentiments to Cornelia, or had he already so plainly showed his attachment that an open avowal was due to himself as well as to her?

He was too excited to judge calmly. One moment he would mentally exclaim against his own vanity, in supposing he had made any impression on her heart; and again memory would present vividly some scene or conversation, until he forgot to reason, in the sweet remembrance of bright hours gone. He could satisfy himself in neither case, and at last remembering that he had an engagement at Mrs. Lynd-

say's, where he hoped to meet Cornelia, he decided to tell her of his intended departure, and let circumstances shape the result, as they have done so often before, even in spite of the best-laid plans.

On arriving at Mrs. Lyndsay's, his eyes eagerly sought the only face they had ever loved to rest on, but sought in vain. At last he approached Marion, and learned from her that Cornelia was gone, and that there was no hope of her return before his own departure. With the undefined, and unacknowledged superstition, that is inseparable from all imaginative temperaments, the tidings fell on his heart as an omen of separation. At any rate the decision was made for him now, whatever the future might bring.

When Cornelia returned home, it was not until all the details of her visit, and her friend's wedding festivities had been duly rehearsed, that her sisters, in giving the news of their own circle, mentioned, "Oh, by the way, Nela, Captain Vernon is ordered off: he was at Aunt

Lyndsay's last week, and was desperately disappointed at not being able to bid you good-bye."

It is wonderful how rapid in its action is the instinct of self-control. Cornelia neither started nor flushed, but continuing her work for a moment—"Where is he gone?" she said, carelessly.

"I do not know—I did not think to ask him; but we shall miss him very much, he was so pleasant."

"Very pleasant," echoed Nela, tranquilly; and, after a few minutes, she quietly left the room.

She was quiet even when she reached her own room, locked the door, and sat down in the wide easy-chair by the table. The blow was too sudden and overwhelming, to cause outward agitation; but within the tempest was fearful: for the sorrow and desolation were embittered by a feeling of shame and self-reproach that she should have suffered her heart to become so entangled.

But the ordinary course of their acquaintance, in their casual meetings, had never awakened a suspicion in her mind of any deeper interest. She knew that his circumstances would not justify him in seeking an engagement, and although she felt certain, on reviewing his conduct, that he thought more of her than of others, she respected him for his forbearance.

She thought long and deeply, and more calmly as she became convinced that neither party was to blame; and at last she could resolve that this trial, instead of subduing her, should be an incentive to a higher life, and she could feel and value the privilege of having known so pure and noble a spirit. And thenceforward, though there was no change apparent to the eyes of others, she was changed for ever more. From this hidden sorrow, patiently received, grew heroic strength and endurance. From the love of one whom she considered so far above her, resulted a striving after that perfection she reverenced.

Are there not sorrows in life whereof it may be truly said that we entertain angels unaware? How much of our highest joy hereafter may be the fruit of the untold griefs of earth, with their deep spiritual discipline.

There is an old legend of a fairy changeling, reclaimed by her mother at the fairy raid; and though, while clasped in her arms, the maiden turns to many fearful shapes, and at last to a flame of fire, the mother holds her firmly, till at dawn she sees her delivered child, her heart's best treasure. Perhaps in the dawn of the eternal day, our treasures may be found among the fiery trials that we have clasped to our hearts in patience through life's long weary night.

CHAPTER III.

THE CREST OF THE WAVE.

"The topmost bright bubble on the wave of the town."
LOWELL.

THE summer came, and brought little change. The Lyndsays transferred the scene of their amusements from New York to Saratoga and Rockaway, where they met the same people, danced the same dances, and pursued the same course of gossip that had entertained them all winter long.

One face, however, was missed from the circle of Matilda's admirers; the baron had disappeared at the close of the winter festivities.

To the ingenious cross-questioning of the matrons of her acquaintance, Mrs. Lyndsay opposed an impenetrable calmness: she was far too able a tactician to suffer them to

imagine that her plans had failed, or to perceive her real perplexity as to the cause of the gentleman's absence.

Matilda had shown some regret at Oscar's departure—perhaps her manner had been cool to the baron; but her mother hoped that the charm of a title would soon efface her unfortun te prepossession in favor of her cousin. Oscar was an excellent young man, but he had no position, and had imbibed all his parents' absurd notions to such an extent that, if Matilda married him, she would sink into mere domestic life, or, at best, a narrow social circle, and not all her beauty and tact could avail to make her a leader of fashionable society.

What a different fate was almost in her grasp! As a baroness, all her gifts and accomplishments would shine with double lustre. Where could the baron be? He had told some vague story of the necessity of attention to important affairs abroad, but no one knew of his whereabouts. If he only would come back now!

Perhaps the lady's wishes would have been

less earnest could she have seen her hoped-for son-in-law on his summer migration. Changed in dress and appearance, so as scarcely to be recognised by his most habitual associates, he pursued "the yellow fly" over the lakes, and down the western waters, shaking in his hand the box and the rattling bait wherewith he would allure the enticing phantom. Those who would take a bee-tree must feed the guide bees on honey; and to enable him to win the heiress he must secure to himself a sufficient provision for the ensuing winter.

The Sumners enjoyed the summer in their own way. The doctor found opportunities for various excursions with his family into the country for a few days at a time; and during August Mr. Lyndsay took the girls to join his own family at Rockaway. They were warmly welcomed by their aunt and cousins, and their other friends at the sea-side. Their first day was fully occupied in watching the ocean in its ever changeful beauty—an amusement the friends who preceded them had long grown

weary of, as well as of criticising the dresses and arranging the flirtations, and all were now eager for something new.

There were some exceptions to this class of busy idlers, and among them the chief favorites seemed to be an artist and his wife, named Esmond, who were gone on a sketching expedition. So much was said of Esmond's pictures, and sketches, and conversation, that the newcomers began to feel great curiosity to see this lion, especially Helen, who, deeply imbued with a true love of art, had already attained a degree of skill unusual for a lady artist.

The following morning brought the usual question—"What shall we do to-day?" A small number went to the bowling-alley, while the rest gathered around Mrs. Spencer, to hear a proposal of a pic-nic party.

"Mary Lester and I will go and meet the Esmonds to-day," she said, "and, with them, select a suitable place; while you that stay here shall superintend the other arrangements. Now let us elect committees."

Towards sunset a large party assembled on the wide piazza of the hotel, and soon after a carriage drove up, and Mrs. Spencer sprang out.

"The Esmonds will be here in a moment," she exclaimed. "Now, Mr. Deane, help me to hold this shawl to receive my treasures; be careful, Mary."

Mary Lester began tossing out a profusion of wild-flowers, long stems of willow, various ferns, and lastly a large bunch of garden roses.

These last were caught by Mrs. Spencer, while she gathered up the ends of the shawl containing all the rest of the flowers, which she called one of the young men from the piazza to take.

"There, good people, I have brought some occupation for you: make yourselves look fascinating for the ball."

"Ah! Mrs. Spencer, pray give us some of those beautiful rosebuds."

"By-and-by, perhaps; let me see who best deserves them."

"How deserve them, ma'am?"

"By making the most of what you have," she answered with a laugh, as she ran lightly up stairs.

Between Matilda Lyndsay and Mary Lester there had been a sort of rivalry from childhood, and the varying attentions of the baron during the past winter had added considerably to the strength of this feeling, especially on Matilda's part; while externally they were on the best of terms, although Mary's high spirit and somewhat keen tongue, often made it difficult for Matilda to keep up the appearance of friendship she thought necessary.

Accordingly, when Mary returned to the piazza, she found the ladies all busily occupied in selecting and arranging their garlands, aided by the criticisms of the gentlemen; and, taking a seat by Matilda, she advised her in a whisper to take a wreath of willow which she pointed out as peculiarly graceful.

"I have no need to wear willow," said Matilda, hastily, with some vexation; for it was not the first jesting allusion Miss Lester had

made to the baron's absence. "I think it would be far more becoming to you."

"Thank you. Mr. Deane, where is your friend, the Baron De Brie?"

Mr. Deane had seen Mary toss over the spray of willow, and Matilda's look of annoyance, so he answered—

"Miss Lyndsay gave him a wreath of willow to make a basket of,—"

"No, Deane," exclaimed Harry Burton, "she gave him the receipt of fern seed, for he walks invisible."

"I heard Smith declare that he saw him on a Mississippi steamer, playing euchre all night long; and that he went at it quite in a business way, too."

"Not more than the rest, I fancy. De Brie was said to be a gentleman, and you know gambling's no sin to a foreigner."

"Well, I don't know; but Smith said he had a wonderful knack at getting good hands, and dice seemed bewitched in his fingers."

Julia Lyndsay, with whom the baron was no

favorite, glanced at Matilda to see if she heard this conversation, and was satisfied by seeing the extremely busy look with which she sorted her flowers.

"Oh! here comes the very man. Smith, where was it you met your friend the Baron, last spring?"

"Friend! thank you; not so bad as that yet. I don't choose my friends among foreign blacklegs and heathen Greeks, if I do play at billiards now and then, or even at nine-pins, when I can find a *fair* player as an opponent," bowing as he spoke to Mary Lester, who had been bowling with him all the morning.

"Well, don't leave the interesting subject; how did his mightiness look? As fascinating as ever?"

"To say the truth, he was so made up I should not have recognised him but for his voice, one or two habitual expressions, and that enormous ring of his. But I certainly did not claim acquaintance; besides my dislike to the man, he looked decidedly seedy."

"Very appropriate," drawled Burton; "gone to Louisiana to plant himself in New Orleans, in hopes of growing a money crop."

"He begins there, I guess, to run his furrow north as the season advances. That Mississippi Valley is a fine growing country, they say."

"Well, I wouldn't give much for anything he can raise; even his wild oats, you may be sure, were light weight."

"Well!" exclaimed Mrs. Spencer—who had been listening with much amusement to this colloquy, and watching Matilda and Mary in their determination not to hear it—"Well, you gentlemen always abuse the poor ladies for talking scandal and picking their friends to pieces; pray what are you doing now?"

"We have such good grounds, Mrs. Spencer: it is all true."

"Of course, we always say so. You don't suppose we say what is not true."

"Truth is often the worst thing you can say about people, Mrs. Spencer," answered Burton. "But I think Miss Sumner has won your roses,"

and he pointed to Helen, who had just finished a half wreath of exquisite ferns, and fastened it in Julia's dark hair.

"How perfectly lovely!" said Mrs. Spencer; "you have made her look like a wood-nymph. Where is Esmond? he will be enchanted."

Esmond—a grave, elderly man—turned when he heard her call him, and coming forward was introduced to Miss Helen Sumner, and from that hour began a friendship, which continued unbroken to the end of his life; that beautiful friendship, which joins the young with the old in pure affection, which is undying, in love of the beautiful, which is immortal.

He combined, in a remarkable degree, "the dreamer and the worker"—saw lovely visions, and patiently embodied them on canvas; but ever seeking results unattainable by human skill, he undervalued his own work, destroyed and reconstructed: and while his fame increased, and his name became a household word, he sighed to feel how little he had accomplished of the mighty hopes and projects of his youth.

But his early enthusiasm was deepened, not impaired, and he was peculiarly fitted to appreciate that of the young girl, and direct her in the study of the beloved art.

His wife was one of those women we so often see married to artists—kind-hearted, loving, striving in every way to make his home happy, but utterly incapable of understanding his lofty genius, or sympathizing in his day-dreams.

Whence are these strange unions? Is it that the soaring pinion becomes weary, and the bird would fain have a quiet nest where to fold his wings at rest until the dawn?

Mrs. Esmond loved Helen Sumner for her happy temper, her true heart, and especially approved of her, because her artist tastes never interfered with her domestic duties; "and however highly a woman may be gifted," said the good lady, "her first duty is to be a good housewife." An opinion often carried to extremes by as well-meaning people as Mrs. Esmond.

Julia Lyndsay had listened anxiously to all that had been said about Baron De Brie, and

soon found an opportunity of asking Matilda if she heard what Smith and Burton were saying.

"Yes," said Matilda; "but I do not believe a word of it. You don't suppose he could have any motive for disguising himself?"

"Not if he were on a gambling expedition?"

"Nonsense, Julia; if you believe all the stories you hear people tell, you may give up the acquaintance of every one living."

Julia's suspicions became certainties to her mind, after reading a letter which Helen received from Oscar about this time.

Oscar wrote constantly. His health was improving, but so slowly that two years at least must elapse ere he could safely return home. Still, every day was full of enjoyment. Extending his knowledge of modern languages, he studied the poets of Southern Europe amidst the lovely scenes which inspired them. "The deeds of the times of old," woke a quicker throb in his heart, as he trod the paths that heroes had trod before.

"And here," he wrote, "I find it harder than ever to understand how this glorious Italy has become so enslaved. How is it possible for any nation so to outlive its memories? Here, amid the scenes of heroic story, of patriotic self-devotion—where the sunny air, the rich coloring, seem to breathe of fuller life—here I find moral death, the lowest depths of mere existence, and utter indifference to all above or beyond. The pulse of liberty seems still to beat in some noble hearts, but with painful intermittent throbbing. Last night I was visited by a young nobleman, whose father was concerned in the conspiracy of the Carbonari, and had been a friend of Silvio Pellico. He was arrested on suspicion, but all proofs against him had been carefully destroyed by the ingenuity of his wife, and after an imprisonment of a few months, he was liberated. Leonardo remembered the night when his father was arrested, and the long days of terror which followed, and his impassioned utterance rose to lofty eloquence as he inveighed against the

tyrannical government, and the craven indifference which submits to it. I have found great pleasure in the society of this young man; he is intelligent, highly educated, and has travelled. By the way, I hardly know how we found out that the Baron De Brie was a mutual acquaintance. Leonardo knew him and friends of his at Paris. He had once a large estate, but is believed to have gambled it all away, and his reputation with it. As you say he has left New York, I hope we have seen the last of him."

His next letters spoke of a very advantageous offer he had received to travel as tutor and companion to a college friend and *protégé* of his, who had joined his parents, at Florence, few months before Oscar's arrival.

Frank Enfield was younger than Oscar, and had entered college one year before his friend graduated. Soon after his matriculation, Frank was seized with a severe illness, and Oscar's care during the days of peril and weeks of convalescence, had attached them strongly to each other.

Their meeting at Florence gave Frank the prospect of fulfilling a long-cherished hope of a journey to Egypt. His mother's health was far too feeble for such an undertaking, and he was so young that his father was not willing that he should go alone. Now if Oscar would only consent to accompany him, everything could be so well arranged. Mr. Enfield was glad to secure to his son the society of one he valued so highly, and his liberal offers prevented any fear on Oscar's part of burthening his father by additional expense.

Although this would lengthen their son's absence, Dr. and Mrs. Sumner could not refuse their consent to a plan so greatly to his advantage. And after seeing Mr. and Mrs. Enfield comfortably settled for the winter, at Florence, Frank and Oscar journeyed into the land of silence.

How powerful is the spell that broods over those vast solitudes; that breathes its mystic influence around the wide deserts with their shifting sands, eternal rest in unrest; the lonely

temples where the thronging steps of worshippers shall sound no more for ever; the pyramids, solemn sentinels above the dead of ages; and the embodiment of desert mystery—the sphinx. Though no living voice breaks upon the charmed stillness to utter her ancient legend—though the tongues that syllabled her teaching sunk to silence, ages ago, beneath her shadow—her silent lips shall reveal a wondrous lesson to the heart that listens aright.

"Children of earth, hear my voice, and read my legend; let him who would know my secret come, and in the stillness of night ponder my words and interpret the mystery. Ye live amid the wild struggles of life—that ocean that with perpetual unrest ebbs and flows, where surges for ever foam against rocky shores, or where wave follows wave only to faint and die upon the sand.

"Far beneath lies the deep heart of humanity, brooding in eternal calm over its buried treasures—the wrecks of life's best

hopes. Let him that waketh come! I will teach him the mystery of life."

"Thou heart of stone, with thy cold impassive brow, looking for ever upward, away from the strife and turmoil of the world, what canst thou reveal to aid us in our life toil?"

"What mortal numbers these pulses? Lay thy hand on the cold bosom of earth, where the ice-bound cataracts stand—a changeless emblem of wasted energy, for ever seeming to press forward, never attaining: canst thou count the throbs of the heart of fire beneath? Deep in my soul burn, like the unquenchable lamps in magicians' tombs, the memories of ages.

"The mighty hearts of old! In these vast solitudes they read deeply the mystic lore of nature, and they told their faith in stone, and left it a sign and a landmark to all future generations. They who once peopled these wide domains—they who, beneath these glowing skies, toiled and triumphed, and suffered and wept—have passed away; and through

long silent ages, I have gazed up to the distant stars, and beheld them sweep along through their vast cycles, which are eternities, which are uncalculated because the mind of man cannot reach the scale of their progression; through long silent ages I have felt the sandy billows of the desert break around my feet, and still I watch, and still I wait.

"Come, stand by my side: let thy weary heart calm itself in this profound stillness; let the patient watching of ages steal into thy restless soul, and teach thee also to wait till thy brief day shall end in rest, which shall be calm and deep."

CHAPTER IV.

EARTH'S SHADOWS.—THE STORY OF A LIFE.

"The one remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light for ever shines, earth's shadows fly.
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until death tramples it to fragments."—SHELLEY.

CORNELIA and Milly Boylston were so generally included by their acquaintances in the phrase "the Sumners," and treated so entirely as the other children of the family, that few persons imagined they were not very near relatives. To explain their adoption, it will be necessary to glance back over a period of ten years.

Ten years ago, then, one chilly October evening, during the cold frosty days that usually precede the Indian summer, and give us a foretaste of winter firesides and closed curtains, the doctor and his wife sat together in

their cozy parlor. Tea was over, the children gone to bed, and the little round work-table drawn to the fire, beside which the doctor sat reading aloud, now and then glancing up from his book to catch the sympathetic light in his wife's lovely eyes.

They were interrupted by a ring at the bell, followed by a well-known voice at the door.

"Will his honor see Biddy Riley just for a moment?"

"Let her come in here," said Mrs. Sumner; and Biddy entered, full of apologies for "throubling the masther," and addressing her rather incoherent story to both her hearers.

"But indade misthress, dear, I couldn't find in my heart to lave it any longer; so I just got a neighbor woman to mind the shop whilst I ran down to see the masther."

"Who's sick, Biddy?" said he: "not you, that's very evident."

"It's just the poor lady that has my room above stairs, yer honor; and a lady she is, bred and born, and as sweet-spoken as ever ye heard,

and two of the purtiest children; sure it's fairies they are, they're so knowin'."

"What is the matter with the lady, Biddy, and how long has she been sick?"

"I think it's a waste, yer honor. Ye see it's about three weeks since I was sittin' knittin' in the shop, whin the doors open, and this lady walks up to the counter. 'What's yer pleasure, ma'am,' sez I? 'I hear you have a room to let,' sez she. Well, misthress, I was dashed! 'Ma'am, it's not for the likes of you that my place is fit,' sez I; so she just smiled the purtiest little smile, come and gone in a breath. 'If it's clean and quiet, it'll suit me,' sez she, 'for I hear you're a decent woman. May I see the room?'

"'With all the pleasure in life, ma'am,' sez I. So, to make a long story short, she took the room, and paid me a week in advance; and that afternoon she came with her two little girls, and there she's lived since, working day and night; always paying the rint aforehand, for all I tried to make her wait till I'd ask for

it, for I saw she's working to death. And now she's worse; she lies on the bed by times, and I don't think she allows herself enough to eat, and all her care is for the children. There's many a thing I try to do for her; but I must mind the shop, and it's little, after all.

"To-day she's very bad, intirely. I took her some broth at dinner, and she just tasted it, and I asked her would I go for a docther?

"'There's no doctor can do me any good, Mrs. Riley,' sez she; but she thanked me, and the tears stood in her eyes.

"There's many a little thing gone from her room the last two weeks; and may be, thinks I, she's no money to pay a docther, so I'll just run down to the masther at dark, and may be he'll come."

A few questions from the doctor elicited some more direct information as to the state of the poor lady; and, advising Biddy to go and prepare her for his visit, he promised to follow immediately.

He found Mrs. Boylston sitting in a low

rocking chair by the stove; her two little girls being asleep in a bed in the corner of the room. He was speedily convinced that some severe reverse of fortune had reduced her to her present state of poverty, and that she was, indeed, as Biddy had declared—a lady. The arrangement of the scanty furniture; the few ornaments, of little intrinsic value, but evidently prized relics; the small bookshelves, with the choice collection of volumes—all spoke of a refined and cultivated mind; and the tranquil courtesy of her demeanor completed the favorable impression.

She expressed her regret that Biddy had disturbed him so late in the evening, especially, she added, as she herself was convinced that her case was beyond the reach of medicine.

This the good physician saw but too plainly; and he did not attempt to raise false hopes, but gave her a palliative for the terrible cough, and promised to see her again next day.

From this time the doctor and his wife visited her frequently, ministering in many ways to

her wants, while their considerate delicacy prevented the obligation from becoming burdensome.

By degrees they obtained her history—not an unusual one; but made painful now by her lonely situation and her anxiety for her children.

She was the only child of a minister in a little village on the New England coast. His parish was a very poor one, but with the frugal habits of the people, there was little distress.

The minister with his own hands cultivaced his garden, and did not consider that he had any cause for complaint, if two-thirds of his small salary was paid "in kind"—produce being more plentiful than money.

His little Milly grew up the delight of her parents; the good man's greatest trouble being that she was so often interrupted in the studies he delighted to direct, in order to share the household labors, which her mother wisely considered no less necessary. And if Eben Boylston, when he was ashore, came to the

parsonage on other evenings besides the regular Sundays and Wednesdays allowed by the understood laws of country etiquette, the minister naturally attributed it to a laudable desire to improve, under his teaching, an education which had outgrown the district school.

Besides, if the unworldly old man had ever thought that Eben and Milly were learning a different lesson from each other's eyes than any he taught them, he would only have said, "Eben was a good boy, honest and pious, and if he could make Milly happy, there was no more to be said."

But the minister's wife died; and not even his love for his child could keep his true heart from following her who had been his life-long happiness. Milly was left alone, with no other means of support than by labor in the factories.

The necessity for exertion is often a blessing in disguise; the imperious force of daily and hourly demands drawing the heart from its absorbing, though vain lamentations over the

unreturning past. So poor Milly found it; and ere the first year of her bereavement ended, the midnight darkness of her earlier hours of trial had given place to a quiet sorrow like the gray stillness of a winter morning.

After a successful cruise of more than two years, Eben Boylston came home, master and part owner of the White Cloud; and, rejoicing in hopes of the near realization of his long-cherished dreams, hastened up the well-known path to the door of the parsonage. All was still and silent; weeds had grown up in the neat garden beds and between the crevices of the door-steps, lichens had crept over the wooden bench in the little porch, the floor of which was strewed with dead leaves from the unpruned honeysuckle, whose straggling sprays drooped over the unused door-way and through the broken lattice-work.

Startled by the utter desolation, the young man returned to the village, to find some one who would give him the information he almost dreaded to ask; and as he left the familiar

steps the dropping of a soft spring rain seemed like tears of regret for the loved and lost, and of pity for him who should meet them on earth no more.

But sad as were the tidings he heard, they were better than he feared.

The next evening found him by Milly's side, and, like the night dew in the soft starlight, tears shed over past sorrow brightened beneath the light of hope and love.

Eight happy years were passed by the sailor's young wife, in the home to which he took her on their marriage. She always spoke of it with such delight and affection—the sunny garden sloping to the south; the prairie rose that climbed even to the roof of the little white house; the green lawn leading to the road; and the far view seaward, where she soon learned to know his new vessel, the Sea Drift, from a hundred other sail, long before she could distinguish the gay flag her own hands had worked floating from the mast-head.

Captain Boylston had left the whaling business and followed the coasting-trade, so that his absences from home might be less protracted; and few happier households could be found than that of the little sea-side cottage.

Poor Mrs. Boylston! how she lingered over this part of her story. Living again as in a dream her short period of bliss; shrinking from the sad conclusion as if she could still avert the blow.

In a severe storm the Sea Drift was wrecked, and Captain Boylston was ruined; but his high character and acknowledged seamanship procured him a berth as mate on a vessel sailing from New York, and owned by a firm whose junior partner had been Eben's schoolfellow.

It was a great and painful change for this family to leave their lovely home they had so long inhabited, for two rooms in a side street in New York. But they were still spared to each other, and several months went peacefully by—Milly finding full occupation by taking

in sewing, to aid in meeting their expenses, increased by a city life. She continued the daily instruction of her children, who, having no other companion, amply rewarded her care by their rapid improvement. Eben Boylston's last voyage had been to Savannah, and thence to Liverpool; and the vessel had now been due for several weeks. Tidings had been received of her sailing from Liverpool, but she had not since been heard from.

"I know he is lost," said the poor wife, sorrowfully, but in a tone of perfect conviction. "Four weeks ago I was asleep, quite late at night; the lamp was burning low in the fireplace, and there was a bright moonlight. I was awakened by a step in my room.

"I had fastened the door before I went to bed, and the sound startled me wide awake. I turned, and by my bedside stood my husband. He looked very pale, but his eyes seemed to shine. He gazed at me steadily but so sadly; then bent and kissed my forehead, and his lips were icy cold.

"I tried to speak but could not. He said not a word, but stood looking at me for some minutes, and at last turned away. In a moment I seemed to recover the power of motion, and sprang up; but he was gone! I examined the room—there was no one; the door was locked, and the children were asleep. Then I knew that he was dead. The next day I went down to Messrs. Longworth and Bradleigh's office to see if they had news of the ship. None since her sailing from Liverpool. They spoke of hoping still to hear; but I could not hope."

From this point in her story she added little more; but Doctor and Mrs. Sumner could readily understand how her already failing health had been impaired still more by this great sorrow: how her exertions, even to the utmost of her diminishing strength, could ill provide for her children. Her conviction of her husband's death made her reluctant to draw money possibly not due to her, or to incur any debt that she might not live to pay.

The sad story was not all told at once, but at various times as the poor invalid could bear; and ere it was concluded the last care of the dying mother was laid at rest, by the promise of her kind friends to adopt her children as their own.

Soon after the doctor went to the office of the owners to inquire for tidings of the missing vessel.

"Good-morning, doctor," said Mr. Bradleigh; "what wind has blown you down town so early?"

"Not a fair one, I'm afraid. Have you any news of the ship young Boylston sailed in?"

"No," answered the merchant, gravely. "I fear we shall never hear of her more. She has been out so long that there is scarcely a chance of her safety. Do you know Mrs. Boylston?"

"Yes, I have been attending her for some days."

"Then you will be the fittest person to tell her that we have given up expecting the ship. I wondered she had not been here to draw her money. I am sorry she is ill."

"There is no need to inform her of the bad news," said the doctor; "she is so convinced that her husband is lost that she would not draw any more, and has, I fear, suffered in consequence."

"That will never do," exclaimed Mr. Bradleigh; "poor thing! sick, and those two little girls to care for. I will draw the insurance for her to-day."

"Insurance! Did he insure his life? She never told us about that; I don't believe she knew it."

"I guess she did not know it. You see he was very desponding before he sailed, and it seemed harder than usual for him to leave home. When I went to see him off, he talked about his family as if he felt he would never get back. I asked him if he had insured, but found out after a while that though he had wished to, he had not enough ahead to provide for his wife and pay premium too. So I told him I would advance as much as he liked, and get it done for him.

"He seemed somewhat comforted, and asked me to insure for one thousand dollars; but when I went to the office I thought I might as well make it five thousand dollars, and I am very glad of it now."

The doctor did not trust his voice in reply, but he grasped the hand of the kind-hearted merchant with a strong and heartfelt pressure.

It was not the first instance of his benevolence that the doctor had accidentally discovered; and although Mr. Bradleigh was not a rich man, his judicious advice, and, when requisite, judicious expenditure and aid, had saved many from poverty, and from that hopelessness that leads to destruction. Among all the sin and misery, the churlishness or recklessness, that we cannot but meet with in a large city like New York, it is consoling to find, as we often do find, that riches are sometimes held by liberal hands, and that if they do at last take to their wings, they have, during their stay, ministered abundantly to the relief of the suffering and desolate.

This provision, so thoughtfully secured, rendered comfortable the last months of Mrs. Boylston's existence, and gave her the satisfaction of knowing that her children would not be absolutely destitute to burden her kind friends.

Winter passed lingeringly away, and, one morning in early spring, Biddy Riley came for Mrs. Sumner. She obeyed the long expected summons, in time to receive the last words of the dying, and to renew the promise of faithfully cherishing the dear little ones left to her care.

CHAPTER V.

THEORIES OF EDUCATION.

"This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own."

WORDSWORTH.

WITH true and tender sympathy the orphan girls were received by their new associates. Poor Cornelia had already learned self-control. Her grief had so distressed her mother, that she had accustomed herself to subdue its manifestation; and her affection, ever on the watch to anticipate her mother's wishes, had rendered her character matured and thoughtful beyond her years.

There is something profoundly touching in the sight of a child, quiet under a great sorrow; and Marion, who was naturally of a similar temperament, though her mother's care

had shielded her from this premature development, understood instinctively, and grieved for Cornelia, showing it in the way most grateful to the child's feelings, by sedulously and unobtrusively guarding her from all remarks or direct condolence.

Little Helen devoted herself to Milly, whose more mercurial temperament exhibited itself in passionate bursts of grief; and when all Helen's caresses and consolations failed, she would come to her mother, sobbing in her excess of sympathy, and beg her to take Milly on her lap, and tell her of the beautiful home her mamma had been taken to, and how she should go to her s me day.

Thus out of this grief a fervent love grew up between the children, fostered by Mrs. Sumner's watchful care.

Cornelia and Milly had already learned to love their new guardians, and in regard to their adoption they felt but one anxiety, caused, like most of the cares of children, by the thoughtless speech of an older person.

"Poor little dears!" said Biddy's neighbor; "but they'll soon get over it, when they've a new papa and mamma."

"Nela," said Milly, softly, "they won't want us to call them father and mother, will they? I can't ever, ever do it,"—and a burst of tears concluded the sentence.

Nela felt like crying, too, for she had heard about adopted children, and her mother had told them of their duties to their new friends; yet she, like Milly, felt that she could never give these dear names to others.

But although so quiet, she was very resolute and straightforward; so, after a few days, she determined to tell Mrs. Sumner what she feared, and to ask her wishes.

She came and stood by the work-table for a while in silence, with a sort of vague apprehension, and a doubt as to whether she were right or not.

"Please, ma'am," she began, and stopped.

"What is it, dear?" said Mrs. Sumner, looking up: but she saw by the pale gravity of the

little face, and the firm lips, that something was the matter, and she drew the child to her with a kiss, and a close, loving pressure, that stilled the troubled heart at once.

"Please, ma'am, what do you wish Milly and me to call you?"

The tremulous tone and anxious glance revealed her fears to Mrs. Sumner's quick penetration, and lifting Nela on her lap, she said cheerfully, to hide her own feeling—

"Would you like to call me aunt Amy, dear, as my little nieces do?"

Cornelia drew a deep sigh of relief, and threw her arms around Mrs. Sumner's neck, saying:

"Very much, indeed, dear aunt Amy;" and a fervent kiss showed that she knew she was understood, and was grateful; and ere long it was hard to say which of her four girls loved Mrs. Sumner most dearly.

As may be imagined, the Sumners and Mrs. Lyndsay educated their children on diametrically opposite principles. We say Mrs. Lynd-

say, for, as she assured her sister-in-law, her husband had too many queer notions to be fit to have any voice in the training of a fashionable woman, and she would not suffer him to place any of his whims in the way of her girls' future prospects.

One day the two ladies were at work in Mrs. Sumner's parlor, when Marion entered hastily on some message from her father. Her dress was entirely covered by a sort of large, loose pinafore, with long sleeves, closed at the wrist, giving her such a droll appearance as to cause her aunt to exclaim, "Why, Marion! what are you about, to make yourself such a figure?"

"I beg your pardon, aunty," said she, gayly, "for coming before you such a figure, but I am helping father in the laboratory, and this is my working apron."

"Helping, child?—hindering, you mean. I fancy you will blow yourself up, there."

Marion laughed, and having obtained what she came for, went away, while Mrs. Lyndsay said:

"That child does not really go into the laboratory, does she?"

"Yes," said her mother, "and she is really useful to her father; she has an extraordinary talent for chemistry, and he takes great delight in teaching her."

"How absurd! what good can it do her?"

"Much, I think. It expands her mind, and gives her a rational source of amusement, instead of the means of wasting time, that most girls seem to seek."

"And in the meantime, what becomes of her education? I never hear her play or sing."

"Because she does not learn music; she has no voice, and no talent for music. She likes to hear it, but that is all."

"And so you only let them learn what they like?"

"Not exactly that," said Mrs. Sumner, smiling. "We are giving them a thorough education in the English branches—history, geography, arithmetic, etc. They must learn

to sew neatly, and to perform the ordinary routine of domestic duties. But the more ornamental branches they acquire as they have talent for them. Cornelia is very fond of music, and gives promise of a fine voice. Helen's gift is for drawing. Marion learns languages easily; she is already a good French scholar, and is progressing rapidly in Latin and German. For all these branches they have the best masters. You know, Matilda, we cannot expect to leave fortunes to our children, and we think it but just to them to give them such an education as will enable them to provide for themselves when we are taken from them."

"So you expect they will never marry; or are doing your best to prevent it."

"On the contrary, we are preparing them, as far as we can, to be good wives and mothers, if placed in that sphere; but to be able to be happy and independent, if they remain single —useful to themselves and to others."

"It is all very well," said Mrs. Lyndsay:

"but I say, make a girl brilliant and attractive; teach her the value of her charms and accomplishments; accustom her to good society —and she will have a far better chance of making a good match, and raising herself in fortune and position, than by any such humdrum ways of practising household drudgery. Let them enjoy their youth; they will learn fast enough to keep house after they are married, or better, will marry rich enough not to need it."

"No one is certain of not needing it, especially in a country like ours," said Mrs. Sumner; "and domestic training can be gained almost insensibly in girlhood, while in after life, when other habits are formed, it is a severe trial. I do not believe in burthening girls too early; but by aiding me in the house, they learn by degrees, and enjoy the lessons."

"I suppose you will think it unnecessary, or even wrong, for them to take dancing lessons. Matilda and Julia are going to join the school that opens next week, and would have liked your girls to learn with them."

"I should like them to learn very much; it gives girls ease of carriage, and is good exercise. I will speak to their father."

"Well!" exclaimed Mrs. Lyndsay, "I never know what to expect from you when the girls are concerned."

"Are you lecturing Amy about the children, *apropos* of Marion's apron?" asked the doctor, who entered in time to hear the last words. "She told me how much you admired it. Why don't you try your arguments upon me?"

"Oh, John!" answered his sister, "I know you are incorrigible; but I did not think you could blind a mother's eyes so completely to the best interests of her children, as you have managed to do with Amy."

"A very serious charge; pray what is it founded on?" said he gravely.

"Will you be content to see all your girls old maids, with all their gifts and accomplishments thrown away, or do you wish them to marry?"

"I certainly think they had better remain

single for some time, at least. I hardly consider even Marion quite wise enough, at twelve years old; and when you come to Helen and Milly—"

"How silly!" she replied; "I don't mean yet, of course."

"Then suppose we wait awhile before we decide, as you concede there is time enough."

"Well, you will see my daughters settled, and well settled, long before yours; and you will have to acknowledge that my theories were best."

"I am content, Matilda. I am in no hurry to part with my darlings."

And so the discussion ended, like most others, leaving each party as firmly convinced of their own wisdom as when it commenced.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GREAT FIRE.

"Hear the loud alarm bells—
Brazen bells!—
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire."

E. A. Poe.

It was a bitterly cold morning in December, 1835, and people came down to breakfast, blue and shivering.

"Where is uncle, aunt Amy?" asked Milly, as the rest of the family seated themselves at table.

"I expect him every minute, dear. He was sent for about an hour ago."

"Mother, did you hear the fire-bells last night? how long they rang."

"Yes, what an awful night for a fire. It must have been far down town, the bells near us ceased so much the soonest."

Almost as she spoke the doctor entered, and, after bidding all good-morning, he sat down to breakfast, tossing the morning paper, unopened, on the sofa. When the meal was nearly concluded, he unfolded the sheet, but saw a sight that made his cheek turn pale, in spite of all his habitual self-command.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed his wife.

"Look here," said he, in a changed voice, "this is an awful fire;" and he displayed the paper containing a list of houses and numbers, three columns long, nearly every item in the appalling account bearing the words, "fire still raging:" while, as if all this were not enough, statements were added, of the impossibility of obtaining water, notwithstanding the almost superhuman exertions of the firemen; of the frozen pumps and hose; of the sufferings of the brave men who worked the engines, and

on whom the water, as it fell, turned to complete ice armor, yet who continued their almost hopeless labor, till they actually dropped from exhaustion.

The doctor hurried away to the scene of terror, and the family lingered in the room with a vague dislike of separating, and a pervading feeling of anxious dread.

That day can never be forgotten by any one who experienced it. The gloom and quiet of all streets remote from the burning district; the restless anxiety that rendered the preformance of daily duties almost impossible; the undefined but unconquerable horror that fell with the night; the dreary peal of bells renewed at intervals, though all unneeded; the glare on the darkening horizon gradually becoming more intense; the hoarse cry of some passer hastening to or returning from the scene of unavailing effort; the hasty reports received from time to time of the steady progress of the flames; and, not least in fearful suggestiveness, the proposal to arrest the progress of the

destroyer by blowing up the houses in its path with gunpowder.

In the afternoon Mrs. Lyndsay and her daughters came. They declared they could not bear to stay at home; they had the horrors all day, and had left word for Mr. Lyndsay to call for them, and started out to seek some change.

Mrs. Lyndsay sat down by Mrs. Sumner, to give her a detailed account of all she had heard and suffered, while the girls turned to the window, where Marion and Cornelia were sewing, and Helen and Milly reading aloud by turns.

"How can you sew and read so quietly?" said Matilda. "I have done nothing all day."

"I am sure I should not have worked, either," said Helen; "but I am glad Marion persuaded us, for I am far more comfortable now than if I had fidgeted about as I was doing."

"But what is the use? it don't make any difference whether you work to-day or to-morrow."

"I think it makes a great difference," said

Marion. "The exertion increases our self-command, and if we do not exercise this in trifles, it will fail us in great emergencies; besides, the very occupation, by interesting us in something apart from our anxieties, tranquillizes us after awhile."

"I believe you are right, Marion," said Julia. "I wish I could be with you a little more. I might get to be worth something; but there is no good to be learned at our house."

"Julia, Julia, don't speak so; there is good to be learned everywhere, if we look for it."

"I can't find it, and there is no one to teach me."

"There is one Teacher, dear, that we can always find if we seek Him," said Marion, gently.

"I know," said Julia, in a softer voice; "but one wants human help and sympathy sometimes, especially at first."

"Perhaps it is best for some of us not to have it. We might depend too much on it."

Julia sighed and leaned her head on Marion's

shoulder, but did not speak for awhile, and as this conversation had been somewhat apart, they now heard Matilda's voice, talking eagerly.

"You are too absurd, Helen, not to go to this greatest ball of the season, on account of the fire! It has not hurt you, has it?"

"No. But I could not enjoy dancing and merriment, when there is so much suffering around us."

"Did aunt Amy say you must not go?"

"No: she left it to me, but I would rather not."

"Well! before I'd give up such a ball for such nonsense, I'd ——— " Matilda paused in despair of finding a sufficiently energetic disclaimer.

"What dress will you wear, Matilda?" asked Milly. "Your pink satin? It is so becoming."

"No, I have worn it twice this season; I must have a new dress."

"You extravagant child! when you have so many pretty dresses."

"That's what father says: but mother always

tells him he does not know what a lady needs. I must and will have something entirely new. I will go down town and choose something next week."

"How is uncle Lyndsay? we have not seen him for several days!"

"He has a little cold, but has been at the fire all day. I suppose he will come home with your father, if he got our message."

When Mr. Lyndsay came, he looked so weary and harassed as to excite the anxiety of his nieces and their kind mother.

He was of a peculiarly amiable disposition, and if weakly indulgent to his own family, that, certainly, was no excuse for their neglect.

The affection of his nieces soothed him, and he would often take refuge with them, from the loneliness and discomfort of his own home. As they rose to meet him on this evening, his own daughters were surprised at the change of expression produced on his countenance by their cordial greeting.

In Matilda it caused but a passing thought; in Julia it awoke reflection.

Some days elapsed before the two families met again. One morning Marion received a note from Matilda, begging her to come as soon as possible, for she was very desirous of seeing her.

Marion was not alarmed by the pressing tone of the request, as she knew that Matilda's anxieties were rarely of greater consequence than the choice of a trimming or the color of a feather; nevertheless, when her household duties were completed, she set out, enjoying the prospect of a walk in the clear winter air.

On her way she entered a store to execute some commissions for her mother, and while the clerk rolled up her purchases, and counted the change, she could not avoid hearing the conversation going on at the stove, near where she stood. Two men were conversing with the proprietor of the store.

"So Brown and Edson are ruined, they say the insurance companies won't pay one-third."

"That's a bad look-out for Lyndsay: he was a sort of silent partner, and is on their paper for a good fifty thousand dollars."

"You don't say so! I thought he was so prudent."

"So he is; but every one thought Brown and Edson as good as the bank."

"I guess his flighty folks 'll have to change their fashions, and come down a little."

"They wasn't as bad as most of those showy ones, after all. You see they always paid their way."

"Yes, but that's all very well when folks has money to pay with: but I'm sorry for Lyndsay."

Startled and pained by what she heard, Marion left the store, and hurried on towards her aunt's house, her heart filled with forebodings of evil; not the least of which was the conviction, scarcely acknowledged to herself, how unfitted her aunt and cousins were to bear adversity.

She resolved to mention what she had heard

to her mother first, as perhaps Mr. Lyndsay's family might not have heard the unwelcome news, or perhaps it might be exaggerated.

Mrs. Lyndsay was alone in the sitting-room, and met Marion with a determined assumption of her usual manner, though there were evident traces of strong and but partially subdued agitation in her pale cheeks and restless eyes. But she was a person who prided herself on the power of concealing her emotions, and Marion, who had the key to this present trouble, would not annoy her by appearing to remark anything unusual.

"I am very glad to see you, my dear. Matilda has to bear a severe disappointment. The great ball is given up."

"Given up!" repeated Marion; "how—by whom?"

"By the Lesters themselves. They are entirely ruined——by the fire."

"How sorry I am for them! and poor Mrs. Lester has such feeble health."

"Yes, it is very sad; especially as I fear

Mary will be of little use or comfort to her. She is quite spoiled by prosperity. Mrs. Lester being confined to her room so much, Mary has gone about as she pleased. She is very giddy and thoughtless."

Was it a consciousness of the helplessness of her own daughters under similar circumstances, perhaps not far distant, which gave added bitterness to Mrs. Lyndsay's condemnation of poor Mary Lester? She sighed heavily, and added—

"Go up and see the girls, my dear. They are in their own room."

Marion ran up-stairs, and found Matilda walking about in much excitement, and Julia sewing.

"Marion, I knew you would come. Is not this too bad?" began Matilda, as she untied her cousin's cloak, and laid it by.

"It is terrible for poor Mrs. Lester, just now, when she needs such extreme care and caution. I was surprised to hear that they were to have had the ball."

"Mary would have taken all the trouble of entertaining. She is a capital hostess, to do her justice. Mrs. Lester would only have had to appear in the rooms while the guests were assembling, and walk through once or twice."

"I thought it very inconsiderate of Mary, myself," said Julia, "and I told her so, and she did not half like it. She said it was all very well for me, whose mother was never sick, but that I would not like to be prevented from doing as other people did, or called mean for making mother's illness an excuse for giving no parties. But I did not think any one could expect it of her."

"Well," said Matilda, "it is all over now. They have just lost everything. But I am so vexed——because——"

"Marion," said Julia, suddenly, "the Baron is in New York again. He called here last night. But although I questioned him about his travels, he was very incommunicative."

"He was very polite, in spite of your rudeness," said Matilda, pettishly.

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"And," continued Julia, "he regretted the very few parties this winter, as he will not be able to meet '*cette charmante M'lle Mathilde.*' So I suppose we shall have him here twice as often."

"Julia, how can you be so silly!" But Matilda evidently liked to be considered the object of the Baron's attentions. She was called away at this moment to receive some visitors, and as she left the room, Julia threw down her work, and drew her chair to Marion's side.

"Oh, Marion, I am so troubled. There is something wrong in the house, some misfortune hanging over us, and we have no home, nothing to fall back on for comfort, if sorrow comes. Father looks worn, and mother fretted, and I dare not ask what is the matter. If I speak to Matilda, she says it is only my fancy. She has no head just now for anything but dress and company, or heart, either, I believe." And the complaint ended in a passion of tears.

Marion held her until she grew quieter, whis-

pering soothing words from time to time, till at last Julia looked up and said—

"Now I am better; tell me what I can do."

"Not much dear, at present, except to prepare yourself bravely for the future, whatever may betide."

"But now, I think, we are getting into difficulties, and Matilda is extravagant, and does not seem to care."

"Try to persuade her, and do your best, above all, to make home happy and comfortable."

"There is one thing that worries me most of all—this M. de Brie. I am sure from what we heard at Rockaway, and before we went there, during last winter, that he is a gambler and an adventurer, and I cannot get mother or sister to listen to me. Matilda will encourage him, and what can she hope from such a marriage? She says I am jealous, but indeed, Marion, it is not so. I would not care if he were only respectable, and that I cannot consider him, although he is so well received in society. I

thought his reluctance to tell where he had been travelling this summer, confirmed Mr. Smith's story."

"In this, Julia, dear, I do not see that you can do anything except to use all the influence you can on Matilda, and tell her and your mother all that you hear respecting his character."

"I have," sighed Julia; "but then he's a Baron!"

CHAPTER VII.

DEEP WATERS.

"Unfathomable sea! whose waves are years;
Ocean of time, whose waters of deep woe
Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
Claspest the limits of mortality!"—SHELLEY.

THE winter passed heavily. The great fire seemed to have involved all classes in its sweeping destruction, and those who were exempt from personal loss were more or less connected, by ties of family or friendship, with the sufferers. The insurance companies could not meet their liabilities; and as the spring advanced, the increasing embarrassments of the commercial world, gradually drew into the vortex of ruin, those whom the fire had spared. Some yielded at once; others struggled frantically against their fate, only to sink in more hopeless despair

Mr. Lyndsay was fitted only for a quiet unanxious life: he could not forecast against approaching calamity, nor was he ready of resource when the difficulty came; although no one could suffer more acutely in the thought of any privation reaching his wife and children, or loss accruing to others through him. In order to secure his family from the fluctuations of trade, he had always kept a portion of his property invested in bank stock and insurance shares; and his old homestead on the Mohawk had been regularly farmed, and kept in order. When he ascertained the amount of his losses by the fire, he rejoiced in his prudence: now, this new misfortune threatened to overwhelm him; he felt that there was little to sustain him in his home.

His wife shared his apprehensions; but there all sympathy ceased, as her principles of conduct were diametrically opposed to his.

The Baron now visited them constantly, and although Mrs. Lyndsay certainly felt sorry for "the poor Lesters," she secretly rejoiced in be-

ing free from a dangerous rival. She was determined to secure the coronet and the estates in France, for Matilda; and, to this end, no effort in maintaining appearances was too great.

Matilda saw nothing but the great prize offered to her vanity. Julia knew no more, but felt a foreboding of the storm, and gradually devoted herself more to her father.

But the Baron feared to pledge himself carelessly to one who might be involved in the falling fortunes of New York; and the general depression being unfavorable to his mode of social existence, or to the state of his finances, which he could not recruit as secretly at the gaming-table as amid the hurry of a gay winter, he again pleaded important business, and departed for more congenial scenes.

Ere long Mr. Lyndsay's worst fears were realized; but he had one great consolation. In spite of his wife's extravagances, his strict honesty had kept him free from debt. No one could reproach him with unjust gain, or with defrauding the hireling of his wages. But

though nothing remained to him, except the old farm, and a very small settlement on Mrs. Lyndsay, he found that when all suspense was over, he felt more calm than he had for months, and he told his wife, with a composure that astonished and soothed her.

"But what are we to do?" said she.

"I cannot tell yet; we must think about it. I should like to go to Montiluna, and work the old farm again. I am more fit for that, and it will be long before business looks up."

This seemed reasonable. Mrs. Lyndsay could say nothing; but—the Baron. The next morning she told her daughters. Matilda burst into tears. Julia grew very pale, but came and sat down beside her mother, saying,

"What shall we do, dear mother?"

"What will you do?" she answered, with a half smile.

"Matilda and I could give lessons, or, as governesses, perhaps we"—

"Julia!" exclaimed her mother, angrily, "what are you talking about? Teach—give

lessons—my children degrade themselves as hirelings! no, never, as long as we can find bread and water to live on. Your father and I have made no arrangements yet, but this is too bad."

"I think it is better than to open a boarding-house, as poor Mrs. Lester had to do."

"No need for that; and it was foolish in them. Mary might have married well, if she had been wiser. Young Upfield was quite devoted to her, and his property is enormous; while last week, when I called at Mrs. Lester's to inquire Biddy's character, Mary was dressed in a dark calico, sweeping the parlors."

"Well, mamma, you know Upfield was dissipated. Mary could not have respected him; and I think she has behaved nobly since their losses. She never complains, and takes nearly the whole charge of the house; she works very hard."

"Yes, it is all very well of her; but who were the Lesters? John Lester's grandfather was a working blacksmith, till some lucky in-

vention made his fortune. But the Lyndsays have royal blood in their veins; and for them to become hirelings!" She paused for a moment, and then added, "Julia, put on your bonnet, and go down to your Aunt Amy's: tell her I cannot go out with her to-day, as I had promised."

"Shall I tell her of this, mamma?"

"They all know it: your father saw the doctor yesterday, and told him."

Julia set out gladly. In spite of her fears, the blow seemed to fall heavily at last, and she longed for the out-door air, and a quiet talk with Marion. The soft spring breeze refreshed her, and when she reached her uncle's house she felt more tranquil—a feeling confirmed by the earnest sympathy of her aunt and cousins. They approved of her desire to exert herself, and promised to ask the doctor to use his influence with her mother.

"We were talking of the Lesters this morning," said Julia.

"When did you see them last, Marion?"

"Day before yesterday. Mary keeps up bravely, and they are beginning to do very well. The children are going to school again. How well Mr. Smith and Mary have both behaved?"

"How so? are they not engaged?"

"No. She refused him last fall; but soon after he heard of their reverses, he offered himself again. She was, of course, very much gratified, but is far too high-minded to marry where she could not love, just to escape from labor. Smith is rather empty-headed, but his heart is in the right place, and he has procured boarders for them, become security for Mrs. Lester, and has been as kind as possible, in such a way, too, that they can feel no painful sense of obligation."

"I had no idea there was so much in him. How could we have guessed it during those weeks at Rockaway?"

A few days passed, during which Mr. Lyndsay made arrangements for breaking up his establishments; and Dr. Sumner fulfilled his

promise to Julia, of trying to persuade her mother to enter into her views.

But in vain he pleaded and persuaded. He represented the opportunities Julia could have of pursuing her own studies while devoting a few hours daily to the instruction of others. He offered her a home in his own family, if his sister thought it best to leave the city. It was all to no purpose. The absurd spirit of family pride, or that phase thereof which considers all avowed labor humiliating, had taken possession of her, and she would not hear reason.

"I really wonder you could think of such a thing for a moment, John; such degradation!"

"My dear Matilda, I never could see any degradation in honest labor. You cannot imagine that I would propose anything for your children that I would not urge upon my own under the same circumstances."

"I cannot bear it," said she, passionately; "to see the Lyndsays hired laborers!"

"What are you to do? In the present depression Lyndsay can obtain no employment, even were he accustomed to the routine of business; and you know that, however gladly I would receive you all, it would be only for a time, or——"

"I know, I know, your kindness is unfailing; but I could not think of that."

"But, my dear sister, my acquaintance is large, and if you consent to Julia's wishes I could be of service. You have educated your girls well; why not suffer them to use their advantages in aiding you and making themselves independent?"

Mrs. Lyndsay's impatience burst all bounds, and she interrupted her brother with a torrent of bitter words and lamentations that required all his self-control to bear in silence.

When she ceased, he asked quietly,

"What are you going to do?"

"We are going to Montiluna. The old house is in pretty good repair, the lease has just expired, and the remnant of our property

will enable us to make a very good appearance in an out-of-the-way village. We shall reserve some of our furniture, the piano, and a few of our handsomest books, for the parlors. For the rest, it is no one's business, and country people do not know how to criticise style. Then we have prospects of future wealth in those unsettled claims. We can do well enough."

Dr. Sumner felt it was no use to say more. He had urged in vain every argument to induce his sister to employ her own energy, and the talents of her children, in some sphere where they could benefit themselves and others. So when she thus ended where she began, he got up with a sigh, bid her good-morning, and walked out of the house.

He proceeded on his round of calls, sorely troubled in spirit. He knew how very small a pittance remained to them, how unfitted they all were for the labor of country life, how many were their artificial wants, how severe and incessant must be the struggle to keep up

appearances, as his sister was determined to do; and he could only console himself with the hope that time would bring wisdom.

But as he pursued his daily labors, he saw other and deeper trials—sickness and suffering; helpless and hopeless poverty; strivings, not for show and false pride, but for daily bread. He witnessed the brave endurance of the Christian, supporting the sufferer through paroxysms of fierce pain; the calm faith of the dying saint, gazing from afar at the dawning glories of the life to come; or the harder victory of resignation in those who were left behind—until the things of this life resumed their comparative unimportance in his eyes, and his disturbed mind its habitual serenity.

The next event was the departure of Mr. Lyndsay for Montiluna, whither he was followed by his family as soon as the house could be prepared for their reception.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEORIES REDUCED TO PRACTICE.

"Toiling—rejoicing—sorrowing
Onward through life he goes:
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close:
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose."—LONGFELLOW.

A FEW weeks after the departure of the Lyndsays for their new home, Doctor Sumner was seized with a malignant fever. In vain the tenderest care was lavished upon one so dearly loved. A few days closed the scene—and the true heart was gone for ever from the home he had made so happy.

All was done that friendship and sympathy could do to soothe the grief of the bereaved family by the many friends that had known and honored the dead; and the good physician was laid to rest by sincere mourners.

Is it well, when the importunate cares of life break in with harsh voices on the holy stillness of a grief like this? Is it not well that these stern monitors, in teaching us of duties yet to be performed, teach us also that there is something yet to live for?

And so when time had calmed the first bitterness of her sorrow, Mrs. Sumner resolutely set herself to consider the future prospects of her family. Many friends were at hand with proffers of assistance; and had the mother and children been willing to separate, they might easily have found homes where they would have been loved and cherished; but they shrank from the idea of idle dependence on others, no less than from the thought of separation. The house they lived in was their own, but they had no other property—the investment for Cornelia and Milly having been lost in the wreck of public securities.

The girls had their own thoughts on the subject, but had hesitated to speak; and it was a relief when their mother began to con-

sult them on the best arrangements to make. Her brother, Dr. Wood, who had lately moved to New York, had undertaken to close Dr. Sumner's affairs, and to collect outstanding debts; so that their efforts pointed to the future alone.

"Have you thought of anything, mamma?"

"I think we had best open a school, my dear, if you are all willing. Our house is well suited for a day-school, and is in a pleasant street, and I think you are fully competent."

"That will be very nice, aunt Amy," said Milly. "I love teaching, and I suppose I may help with the little ones."

"And you will have to study, too, little lady. Your education is far from complete yet, even in the ordinary sense of the term."

"I like to study, too, aunty; but how are we to divide our classes and our duties?"

"We must consult about that, and each take what we can do best."

"Oh, here is uncle Wood; he will help us."

"Help you—how, children?" said Dr. Wood,

as, after an affectionate greeting, he seated himself comfortably in a deep arm-chair.

"We are talking of what we are to do, uncle," said Helen. "Mother thinks we had best open school."

"It will do, I imagine, if you can teach most of the branches yourselves. How is that?"

"Milly and I can teach the English branches," said Mrs. Sumner; "Helen will teach dra ing, and Nela music; they all speak French."

"And," added Helen, "if I could get some miniatures or wood-engraving to do, I should like it very much. Mr. Esmond advises me to devote myself entirely to wood-engraving."

"I think it will be better for you than teaching," said the doctor, "after a while, at any rate. Now about the school; what sort of an establishment is it to be, when do you begin, and have you any scholars engaged?"

"I wish to commence on the first of next month. We shall keep a day-school at first; whether we take any boarders or not must depend on circumstances. I think I know of

eight or ten that I could be certain of, but I have spoken to no one as yet."

"What about your circulars?"

"I never thought about them."

"Pretty folks you are. Here, give me a pen and ink; we will soon prepare one, and I will leave it at the printer's as I go home."

The circular was written, discussed, and re-written; and at last copied and deposited in Dr. Wood's pocket-book.

"Now, Miss Nelly," said he, "let me see some of your work. What have you painted last?"

Helen hesitated a moment, and the tears rushed to her eyes, but she controlled them, though she dared not trust her voice, as she handed her last finished work to her uncle—a miniature of her father. The doctor looked at it long, and then said,

"It is a perfect likeness. Lend it to me, my dear; it may be of use to you. You know I will be careful of it."

There was a silence of some moments. Then he abruptly changed the subject.

"I want you all to be very sorry for me."

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Sumner, looking up rather startled.

"I discharged my clerk to-day—the fourth in five weeks. What has got into the boys now-a-days? I can't find one with head enough to put up a prescription. I must look for another to-morrow."

"Will you take me, uncle?" said Marion, quietly, looking up from her work.

He swung his chair round a little, and bent his head to see her face under the lamp.

"What do you mean, child—are you in earnest?"

"Quite in earnest."

"What do you know about it, I should like to ask? I don't believe you could tell salts from soda; and I want some one to work with me in my laboratory among the chemicals."

"I am not sure whether I know enough for you, dear uncle, but I am very fond of chemistry, and have studied and experimented a

good deal; at least, I know enough to be certain I could learn more."

"Hem! you girls were always to learn everything. Know Latin, too, I suppose?"

"A little," said she, smiling.

"Well, let me try you." And then followed a long and close examination, during which the doctor's face brightened as Marion gave her clear and intelligent answers, till at last he turned round again, and leaned his head on his hand, thinking.

Marion resumed her work, but she was excited, and her hands trembled. Here, perhaps, was an opening for her; an opportunity for her to engage in the pursuit she best loved, and which she had studied under her father's direction for years. There would be no unwomanly braving of the opinions of others. In her uncle's laboratory and study she could be as secluded as in her mother's parlor, and she could add at once to her mother's income.

Besides, she would be spared the necessity of teaching. She had not the gift of impart-

ing knowledge, well as her own mind was stored; and she had really dreaded the task before her, although she resolved, if no better occupation offered, to devote herself conscientiously to the duties allotted to her. But now ——!

The more Dr. Wood considered, the better he liked the plan. Of all his relations Marion was his favorite. He knew that she was energetic, punctual, and exact; and that she possessed a clear and powerful intellect. Her womanly neatness was another great recommendation, especially to one who had been so harassed by the very untidy ways of various "boys;" and to crown all she would be a most congenial companion. He looked also at her side of the question. She must do something, and he felt certain that he could make her comfortable and happy. At last he spoke.

"My dear child, my only doubts are on your account. Can you bear the steady occupation and confinement, day after day?"

"I am not afraid, uncle; my health is good.

I like the work, and think it far less wearying than teaching, while the confinement is no greater: if you will only try me."

"Well, dear, if you do not like it I shall be no worse off than I am now. There is one thing more. As the fall advances the days will shorten, and it will be best for you to live at my house; nominally, at any rate, Amy," said he, observing the change in Mrs. Sumner's countenance. "I will come home with her when I can, and while the days are long she can come by herself; but it would not be right for her to come so far alone in the evening. Let her have a room at my house; good Mrs. Janison will see that she is comfortable, and you will not be uneasy about her in stormy weather. Don't decide in a hurry; I will call in again to-morrow evening."

The result of this conversation was Marion's establishment as her uncle's assistant, to the satisfaction of all parties.

Mrs. Sumner organized her school successfully, and soon had the satisfaction of feeling

that she and her children were able, by their own industry, to obtain a sufficient competence.

* * * * *

In September of this eventful year, Oscar Sumner and Frank Enfield reached Constantinople, on their way home. Their journey had been unexpectedly retarded; so that only some letters of the previous autumn awaited them—all later ones having been forwarded to their banker at Paris.

How eagerly the welcome packages were opened and read; the most trifling details acquiring strange importance in the eyes of those so long deprived of news from home, and however numerous and minute, always leaving something to be told or wished for. Oscar received letters from every one of his family; long, pleasant letters, various in character, filled with all that had interested or amused the writers—reports of lectures, descriptions of pictures, abstracts of books and conversations—all the kaleidoscopic interests of daily active life.

"Ah!" said Frank, with a sigh, as he laid down his two epistles after a third reading, "I wish I had a large family. My letters are very precious; but mother can only write a few lines at a time, she is so weak still, and father cannot write all the time—and there is so much I should like to know. How happy you are!"

"Would you like to read some of these?" said Oscar; and retaining those that contained the more private information, he handed a number of sheets to Frank, who seized them eagerly, and was soon too absorbed in the enjoyment of them to notice the change in Oscar's countenance as he opened one that he had not before seen. It was from Matilda Lyndsay, and was as follows:—

DEAR COUSIN OSCAR,—I hardly know how you will receive this letter, which has caused me so much doubt and anxiety; and now that I have compelled myself to write it, how shall I express my meaning so as to spare you pain, yet deprecate your anger towards me? But you must know all, and it is easier written than told. Our engagement must end. There—you know the worst; unless it be worse to know how fickle, how frivolous, how unworthy of you I am. I do not undervalue you.

I do not doubt you could bestow on me a nobler happiness than that I seek; but it will not content me. I have entered the world—there I find my sphere and my enjoyment. I must have wealth, position, gaiety. These you cannot give me, or not for a long time, and then my youth will be past.

I almost condemn myself for the choice I thus make; yet I cannot do otherwise. I must be happy in my own way.

Do not reply to me. I shall take your silence as the ratification of my release; and at this moment I hardly know whether that release, or the fulfilment of my former promises, is the most painful. But I have decided. We could not be happy, because our aims in life are so far apart.

May you find one more worthy to fill your heart and home, and, if you can, think kindly of one who will always remember you with true regard. Your cousin, MATILDA.

Oscar sat motionless, with this letter in his hand. His early dreams and hopes swept away suddenly, and for ever. He was so entirely unprepared for such a blow that it fell with overwhelming force, and for a time he could neither think nor reason—he could only feel. Nor could he realize that he had only loved a phantom of his own imagination in the outward semblance of his cousin, instead of Matilda, as she really was.

He was roused by Frank's voice.

"Thank you, old fellow; those are famous letters. But what's the matter?—are you ill?"

"No," said Oscar, trying to exert himself; "let us go out"—for he felt the air of the room stifling.

He was not long in recovering self-control, for he never allowed his own troubles to interfere with his duties, or the enjoyment of other people. And during the journey to Paris, although graver and more silent than during the earlier part of their travels, his young companion never appealed to him in vain for information or sympathy.

Frank Enfield was a very pleasant travelling companion; good-tempered, and ready to perceive and enjoy the endless trifles that contribute to the pleasure of travelling. His mind and taste were cultivated, his fancy active; and though he lacked the depth and resolution that marked Oscar's character, he possessed a power of adapting himself to circumstances, which often answered as well as conquering them.

When they reached Paris, they found Mr. and Mrs. Enfield awaiting them, with all arrangements made to sail for New York, as soon as the young men should arrive. The cause of this haste was soon explained by Mr. Enfield, who cautiously and kindly revealed the sad tidings brought by his own letters, before he produced those for Oscar.

These letters were of different dates, and had arrived at intervals since the previous fall. The earlier ones told of his uncle's failure, and of the removal of the Lyndsays to Montiluna: later ones, of his father's death and its consequences.

How trifling seemed his own trial, in view of these deep griefs, involving his whole family. Now, he must act; and he felt as if he could hardly endure the long sea-voyage that must be made ere he could be again among the dear ones now left so lonely.

With womanly tact, Mrs. Enfield consoled him. Her sufferings had been blessed to the renewing of her soul, and led her to the one

only Source of all comfort. From this source she drew balm for the sad heart of her young friend; and with her he conversed freely of the past and future.

One beautiful evening, on board ship, they were all on deck; the sun had set, and the stars shed faint lines of light across the quiet water. Frank had, as usual, gathered around him all of his fellow-passengers who were below the age of ten, and they proved fairly that the evening stillness had no influence over them.

Apart from the confusion they made, Mrs. Enfield sat talking with Oscar, and Mr. Enfield walked back and forth, joining in the conversation, or suggesting new frolics to the children.

"I begin to see my duty clearly now," said Oscar. "I must leave the law."

"Why, Oscar? It seems such a pity: you are so fond of your profession."

"Because the care of my family must rest upon me now. My dear father has left no property except the house we live in, even if

that is unencumbered; and of this I am not certain."

"He has left you a better legacy," joined in Mr. Enfield—"a good name. The memory and example of one like him is a treasure. All who knew him will deem it a privilege to aid his children to acquire an honorable independence. You know, Oscar, that I will be most happy if I can forward you in any way."

"I know that you have both been the best and kindest of friends to me," responded the young man, with glistening eyes.

"What is the use of having friends, unless you make use of us?" said Mrs. Enfield; "but why is it necessary for you to give up a profession?"

"I should have to study some months longer before I could be admitted, and after that I am not so sanguine as to imagine that I could at once obtain business enough to enable me to respond in any degree to the claims that must or ought to be made upon me. I must seek some commercial employment, which will give

me a certain income at once, with the hope of increasing it."

"You are right," said Mr. Enfield; and he walked up and down twice or thrice ere he spoke again. Oscar was silent too. It was not possible that the cherished hope of years could be relinquished without pain, however the heart might be sustained by the sense of duty.

At last Mr. Enfield said, "Oscar, I have lost much in these wide-reaching calamities, and I must resume my business. The hitherto active partner moves to the west. I am going back to the counting-house, and I should like you to be with me, but for one reason."

"What is that, sir?"

"You might feel yourself so pledged to me as to refuse better offers from a feeling of honor. I will do the best I can for you, but others may do more. If such be the case, and you can remember that I feel with you, that the interest of your mother and sisters is your first study, come to me at once, until you can do better."

Oscar did not reply, except by the fervent grasp of the hand outstretched to him; yet, neither he nor his friends believed that any words were needed to make the engagement binding.

"Well, Sobersides," said Frank, giving Oscar's hair a little pull, then throwing himself down at full length, and laying his head in his mother's lap—"what are you so quiet about to-night?"

"I should imagine it would be a marvellous relief, after the noise you have been making for the last hour."

"Evil communications, *et cætera*," quoth Frank, with a yawn; "but the charming little mischiefs are swept off (to bed) by inexorable fate, attired in her most sombre garments, and whitest frilled night-cap, and I am at leisure to hold my tongue. Why can't we have some music? Here come the rest of our minstrel band."

There were few passengers on board, but several of them had fine voices, and it had

become customary for them to assemble on deck during the warm evenings, and sing; and soon the mellow strains rose and swelled, seeming almost to be caught up and repeated by faint voices in the distance, as the blended sounds rolled away on the light evening breeze.

So night and morning came—the voyage began and ended—and they who, for awhile, had sojourned together in that intimacy of isolation, on the waste of waters, parted as friends part—to meet again no more.

There were glad welcomes by happy firesides, to the wanderers who had come home; lonely hearts sought a resting-place and fresh ties in the strange city, and brave adventurers went onward to the far west, to realize, in a new home, their visioned fortunes, or to find that the setting sun had but guided them to—a grave.

Emblems of human life! How we find them enfolded one within another, through the wide universe, in endless variety and gradation,

until we reach the germ and epitome of all—a single human heart.

There were happy hearts in Mrs. Sumner's home on the night of Oscar's arrival—happy notwithstanding their great loss, their changed fortunes, their private griefs. They knew the secret of true happiness—Christian faith and Christian love; and the long absent was again among them.

CHAPTER IX.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

"But for the dwelling of the proud and poor,
From their own lips the world will never know
When better days are gone:—it is secure
Beyond all other mysteries here below."—HALLECK.

WITH a very narrow income, but with an unfailing energy, worthy of a better cause, Mrs. Lyndsay began her new mode of existence at Montiluna. The farm was beautifully situated, sloping on one side down to the river; with broad meadows on the other side, stretching back to the hills, whose forest-crowned summits formed a beautiful background.

But the pleasure which Mrs. Lyndsay experienced, at the first view of her future residence, was not derived from hill or meadow, river or forest; but was due entirely to the fact that it was a full half mile from the last house in the

village, and thus she fondly hoped she would be exempt from curious observation, in carrying out the schemes of economy which would be necessary to enable her to make a proper display on needful occasions.

Mr. Lyndsay had, with a servant, preceded the rest of the family, and had prepared, as well as he could, for their reception. A "country tea" was spread out on the table in the kitchen, as the most habitable room—being unincumbered with the packing-cases so plentifully scattered over every other part of the house; and varied as were the feelings of the party, the curiously assorted meal was enjoyed by all.

Mr. Lyndsay was really glad to be at home again. For him the old kitchen was peopled, in every nook and corner, with old memories, that sat in familiar shapes in the high-backed chairs, peeped from the quaint corner cupboards, thronged round him in the twilight, and made the smoky rafters ring with echoes, heard by him alone, of long, silent laughter. Familiar voices sounded over the fields and through the

darkening windows; familiar steps trod the creaking floors; and by-gone dreams of happy boyhood returned in all their pristine beauty to bless the world-weary man.

And the dreams seemed rather realized than dispelled, when Julia drew a low bench to his side, and silently leaned her head on his arm.

She, too, was glad to be here at last. The suspense was over, and this was the refuge from the world that had so disappointed her imagination. The circle she had been introduced into was devoted solely to fashion and pleasure, and even in her lightest hours she had longed for something more. Now her mind was awakened by these changes of fortune, and their effect on her parents and associates. She began to think: life expanded before her: she felt as if cast alone and helpless into infinite space, with duties and objects to be sought and pursued; but she knew not how to seek them, and the solemn meaning of life oppressed her spirit with awe, terrible from its very vagueness.

Therefore she felt a relief in this emancipa-

tion from the city. The charm of fields and woods was new to her, and seemed to breathe over her troubled heart spells of rest. One of her great troubles was, that her sister was no companion to her. Matilda's violent grief had given place to a sort of settled gloom; and instead of conforming to their present position, she seemed only to think of escaping from it.

The selections that Mrs. Lyndsay had brought with her, from the wreck of her former splendor, would have been unaccountable to any one who did not fully understand her reigning passion.

Two good sized rooms on one side of the hall were set apart as parlors. These were papered, painted, and adorned with the brilliant carpets, curtains and furniture from her former house. A few showy books and ornaments graced the unused centre-tables; gilt girandoles held a few wax candles: everything was carefully arranged, and then the parlors were locked, and left alone in their glory.

A small set of superb cut glass, some old

wine, and sealed boxes of plum-cake, insured refreshments in keeping with the appearance of these rooms. Beyond these, Mrs. Lyndsay firmly resolved that no prying eyes should penetrate.

Julia soon found her time fully occupied. They had one servant—a hard-working German woman, accustomed to out-door labor and scanty fare, and who found housework, with abundant food, a life of comparative ease. She possessed one further recommendation—she knew little English, and had no desire to increase her knowledge by gossiping with her neighbors.

Mrs. Lyndsay began her housekeeping in serious earnest. Everything was strictly and exactly done. Nothing was wasted; and from the produce of the farm they had enough of food and fuel. But to persons who had lived in the city, many little luxuries had grown to positive necessaries, and the hardness and homeliness of all around them, became of itself a severe trial.

Mrs. Lyndsay had a sort of satisfaction in the thought that, by these sacrifices of daily comfort, they had secured a properly ordered reception room, and rather increased than diminished the severity of her economy. But Julia tried to remedy all deficiencies as far as inexpensive ingenuity could do it. The old furniture was cleaned and revived, plain curtains were hung, and many little devices employed to give a habitable look to the farm-house. Especially she cared for the garden, which flourished and extended under her management, until the whole descent from the front of the house to the river was bright with flowers and soft grass, in place of the rough growth of underbrush that had disfigured the spaces between the wide-spreading trees.

How far Mrs. Lyndsay had secured her object, of avoiding the gossip of the village, may be imagined by a glimpse at a party, assembled in the house of deacon Peters.

A large patchwork quilt, stretched in the frame, and resplendent with scarlet and green

chintz, was the ostensible object of the gathering; but any one who had heard, not seen, the busy group, would have declared it a solemn conclave, convened to examine and decide upon all questions touching the pretensions, habits, and circumstances, past, present and future, of the new-comers.

"Why, Mrs. Peters, I thought you was going to have the new folks here to-night."

"It ain't my fault, Mrs. Smith. I thought, as we meant to have a little dance, it might be neighborly for the young folks. I see there was two girls in meetin'; so last Monday, Susan and me just went up to ask them. But my! talk about city folks givin' themselves airs. I never see anything to match it."

"Did you go in, Mrs. Peters? How did the old place look?"

"You see, after we got the dinner things put by, we got on our bonnets, and walked out there. It was pretty warm, you know; but the outer door was shut as tight as if it was December. Well, we knocked. They've got

up a new knocker; and by-and-by a Dutch woman comes to the door. Instead of taking us into the sitting-room, she opens the parlor door. I hardly knowed the old place; it looks for all the world like a show-shop—such curtains, and little painty things on the mantel-shelf, and little bottles that looked like sugar-candy.

"I couldn't help going up to feel of the curtains, if they was really silk. They must have cost a sight; and while we was looking at them, the door opened, and in walked Mrs. Lyndsay, as grand as you please, in a silk gown with a lace cape over it. It might have been better if she had had a sensible cap on her head, instead of the fancy thing she had pinned on her back hair. Well, she bowed mighty stiff—never even shook hands or asked us to take our bonnets off, but said something about 'not knowing our names,' and 'the servant forgetting cards.'

"So, says I, 'I'm Deacon Peters' wife, Mrs. Lyndsay, and this is my daughter Susan,' says

I, 'and we're a going to have a quilting o' Wednesday, and a sort of a kintecoy after, and I'd be glad to see your young folks, and you too, if you'd like to come. There'll be lots of the folks round, and it 'll be a good time to get acquainted.' Well, she just draws herself up a little stiffer than before, and says she, 'I am much indebted to Mrs. Peters for her polite invitation (just as if she wasn't talking to me), but I regret that it will be impossible for my daughters to accept it.'

"So thinks I, it's hard for the young ones to be kept up so. I'll just try again for a little; and I says, 'Ma'am, if you can't spare 'em all the afternoon, can't they come to tea? and if your old man's too busy to come after 'em, I'll get some of the boys to see 'em home. They'll like it right well, too, to have such pretty girls to walk home with.'

"How that could have affronted her, I don't know; but she looked at me as if she'd eat me.

"'I must beg you to excuse them, Mrs. Pe-

ters,' says she. Just then the Dutch girl brought in some cake and wine; and while we took some, Mrs. Lyndsay never said one word, which I thought wa'n't hardly civil; so we come away, and I guess we shan't try it again. I don't like such stuck-up ways."

"Now, who'd a thought it!" said Mrs. Smith; "my old man see Lyndsay several times, and he likes him first rate. 'None of your fine city ways, wife,' says he; 'he's a real common man!'"

"So was the old squire," added Mrs. Brown, who, no longer able to quilt, was knitting vigorously on a butter-nut colored sock. "The old squire was as plain a man as you'd wish to see. Butter-nut cloth was good enough for him, and his wife come to meeting in a factory print; but I thought this boy'd be spoiled by his city broughtin' up."

"Boy! aunty Brown, he looks as old as you do now."

"May be, I wear better 'n he does; but he was nothin' more'n a boy when he went

away, and that's thirty good year, and more, ago."

"Well, the old folks' going-to-meetin' suit wouldn't answer these ones at all," said some one else; "did you ever see how they was tricked out on Sunday?"

And one and another gave their opinions, and the appearance, manners, and customs of the Lyndsays, formed the staple of the afternoon's conversation. But the rejection of Mrs. Peters' hospitality was so far resented by them all, that they resolved to make no further efforts to be "neighborly" until Mrs. Lyndsay should seek their good will; although many were the lamentations wasted on "those poor girls!" who were supposed to be longing in vain for the pleasures of that society from which they were debarred by their proud, severe mother.

An extract from a letter, written by Julia to her cousin Marion, describes the only entertainment given this year, by Mrs. Lyndsay, and gives some insight into the feelings of the young girl:—

"Poor Matilda has felt the change of our home sadly; and though she does not complain, she has lost her gay spirits, and seems unable to rouse herself. She needs society more than I do, and friends less, I believe; for if I had you and Nela with me I should ask no more. I try to do as you advise me (ah! if you could know how precious are those letters that you call homilies); and you would laugh to see me learning the difference between rag-weed and carrots, so as to reject or eject the weeds, and spare the flow——no, vegetables, which stand in equal danger from my unskilful hands.

"Scarcely less absurd is my appearance in the kitchen; but there I perceive, already, dawnings of genius—my last essay being a pot-pie, to which I was incited by the following incident:

"We had a barn raised last week, and according to what father says, is established usage, we prepared as sumptuous a supper as our materials would supply. Not in the least in New York style.

"We had a pig roasted whole, huge dishes of baked beans, roasted chickens, and fine fresh fish, with cider, pies, pickles, etc., mingled in graceful confusion. But to our dismay, we saw disapproving faces, and vain were our endeavors to discover the cause, till at last I heard Jim Blake whisper to his neighbor—

"'I say, Bill, that's real mean—there's no pot-pie! Who ever saw a raising without pot-pie afore?'

"But Bill is rather friendly to us, and responded, 'Fo, Jim, 'taint that—the squire ain't mean; but you see they're green city folks, and don't know what's what; they've done the best they knew.'

"Think of mamma, after all the *recherché* banquets she has presided over, being excused for a breach of country etiquette, on the plea of ignorance! I laughed till I cried; but have since seriously commenced my education.

"Ah, Marion, my education must go deeper than all this: how much I have to do! and my soul is filled with a passionate unrest, that I

strive to bury deep under toil, and occupation, and jest; yet it will not be silent—it will not sleep.

"And before me life seems to stretch vast and illimitable, and I feel that there is something for me to do—some object even for me, in the infinite space; but all is vague and shadowy; and when I turn to realities, I am overwhelmed by a multitude of petty cares—trifles that must be done, day by day, with no permanent result, no visible fruit. Oh! this desperate feeling of drifting, drifting, on the ocean of life—breaking, one by one, the bubbles that rise around me; while before me rolls the boundless waste, that seems to hold no port or haven for me.

"Forgive me for writing so drearily; but you are the only one to whom I can speak freely, and sometimes I feel as if my heart would break."

To this part of Julia's letter, Marion replied:—

"With regard to your own feelings, dear

Julia, I need not again assure you of my deep sympathy; your true education has indeed commenced the development of your mental and spiritual life. And long and severe though the conflict may be, with doubts, and fears, and uncertainties, go on with patient courage, leaning on the sustaining arm of Him who has gained for us the great victory, 'whose strength is made perfect in our weakness.'

"And remember this, your work is clearly defined for you, to subdue your own spirit, and bring it into subjection; and to this end every care, however trivial, may be made an instrument of training our souls, in the calm, resolute performance of the work allotted to us.

"He who has appointed our sphere of labor has given us in His words an unerring guide; and in his love we shall find sympathy, consolation, and strength, and His blessing shall crown us when our work is done."

CHAPTER X.

FASHIONABLE MARRIAGE.—AN INTRODUCTION.

"No blushes or transports, or such silly actions;
It was one of the quietest business transactions,
With a very small sprinkling of sentiment, if any,
And a very large diamond imported by Tiffany."

W. A. BUTLER.

THE busy monotony of the Lyndsays' daily toil was at last interrupted in the midst of their second summer among the hills and valleys.

A breath from the perfumed atmosphere of fashionable life was wafted to them early in the Saratoga season, in the shape of a rose-colored note from Mrs. Spencer, entreating the pleasure of her dear Matilda's company for a few weeks, at the Springs.

Mrs. Spencer was thoroughly a woman of fashion, but she was a favorable specimen.

Really kind-hearted, generous from impulse, she was rich enough to indulge her amiable fancies. Not pre-eminently beautiful or gifted, she yet possessed wit and beauty enough to form a powerful combination; and her position was so marked and established that she had no fears of rivalry. She could always win friends when she chose: she never made enemies. In her very lightness there was a charm, and her wit never left a sting.

She was very sorry for the Lyndsays, and, judging Matilda by herself, thought she would be glad to enjoy a change from the dulness of a summer "in such a forlorn place as Montiluna."

The invitation was gladly accepted, and after a few busy days spent in refitting the long unused gauze and lace dresses to the present mode, Matilda departed, to appear once more in "society."

About a week afterwards Mrs. Peters' little black girl came running in from the gate where she usually kept watch on the doings of the village, thus enabling Mrs. Peters to

acquire all public and private news, with unheard of celerity, which, added to her natural keenness, caused her to combine the advantages of a village oracle and daily bulletin.

"O! Mrs. Peters, there's such a fine wagon stopped at uncle Jake's."

Uncle Jake kept the only establishment in the village that boasted any pretensions to hotelship.

"Who's in the wagon, Jinny?" said Mrs. Peters, looking through an ingeniously contrived opening in the window-curtain, that enabled her to see without being seen.

"Werry fine man, Mrs. Peters," answered Jinny, trying to get a peep from behind her mistress's elbow.

"Him's got whiskers all over his face, and red ribbons on his coat; and t'other man with him's a soldier I guess; he's got gold all on his hat and coat, like training day."

"Run down to the store, Jinny, and get me a pound of tea; be back time enough to fill the kettle."

Away went Jinny on her errand, which she well understood. The store was next door to the tavern, and the tea was the least important part of her mission. Jinny was born for a diplomatist, she needed no detailed instructions, she knew better than to go about asking questions; but turning the money for the tea listlessly in her fingers, she wandered with staring eyes among the loungers by the tavern door, who were admiring and criticising the splendid horses. Every word they said was carefully noted by the careless-looking little darkey, who received more than one admonition to hurry on her errand, from those who little imagined that she was doing it in the best possible manner.

The horses were fed, the gentleman took lunch, and then inquiring the way to Mr. Lyndsay's, drove up the road. All this took time, and it was nearly two hours from the time of her leaving home ere Jinny re-entered Mrs. Peters' gate.

"Mrs. Peters, what sort of an officer is a barel?"

"A what! child, what are you talking about?"

"This bit o' paper, ma'am, as I picked off the valise; but I can't spell anything but barel."

This was an unexpected treasure. Mrs. Peters seized the card and read, "Colonel Baron De Brie," and then listened eagerly to the detailed report of her sable emissary.

"The soldier is only his servant, ma'am; he said 'master' several times, and they fed the horses, and had briled chicken for themselves, and now they's gone to see Mrs. Lyndsay."

"How long are they going to stay, Jinny?"

"They druv' over from Saratogy this mornin', ma'am, and they's going back to-night."

A queer misgiving seized Mrs. Peters. Perhaps for once she had been mistaken, and the Lyndsays were really high people, after all, and Miss Matilda would be a baroness. Perhaps Mrs. Lyndsay's stiffness was only a dignified manner. Why had she not tried again to make the acquaintance? It would have been so nice to invite a real baron to a tea party.

How surprised Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown would have been. But her regrets were all too late, and she could only console herself by taking her knitting, and going to drink tea with Mrs. Brown, who, living out of sight of the main road, would thus hear first from herself the news of the distinguished arrival.

The Baron was a cautious man. He had heard many rumors about the Lyndsays' loss of property, mingled with contradictory reports, that they had only seized the occasion of the general depression to withdraw prudently from the threatening destruction. He really admired Matilda, and with equal fortune would have preferred her to any other; and her appearance at Saratoga, with unimpaired beauty, and her accustomed elegance of dress, revived his hopes that her father's fortune was still intact.

But ere he committed himself irrevocably he determined to see, unknown to her, their present residence, and judge for himself.

As he drove up to the house, he was struck

by the beauty of the situation. The flower garden in front was neatly kept, and filled with choice flowers. The old porch had been altered, and covered with luxuriant prairie roses and sweet-scented clematis—for Julia's care was well paid by the success that attended her labors.

Behind the house rose a long sloping pasture field, and in front the descent continued to the edge of the river, which rolled clear and sparkling under broad spreading trees. On the other side of the stream a varied landscape of hills and valleys, forests and meadows, extended for several miles, till the horizon was bounded by a misty range of blue mountains.

Never had Mrs. Lyndsay rejoiced so sincerely in her elegant reception rooms, as when she saw the Baron's carriage approach the door. Her toilet, though speedy, was careful in the extreme, and her cordial greeting as tranquil as if she had seen him but the day before.

The scrutinizing eye of her guest could detect no change in the polished manner, not a trace of care on the placid brow. The exqui-

site wine was served in the curious glass, and on massive silver as of old; and the perfect arrangement of the parlors was improved in effect by the lovely and varied views framed by the open windows.

The conversation flowed on easily, while the skilful adventurer endeavored to obtain indirectly the information he sought.

"Did Mme. Lyndsay like the country? Would she not prefer to return to city life? Had Mr. Lyndsay a large estate here? Three hundred acres! it was a principality!"

The Baron forgot, or did not understand the relative value of land in a thinly settled country. Such inquiries as these, scattered through a conversation of an hour, confirmed him in his conclusion that the family had lost but little, and that their removal had been prudential, or caused by the failing health of Mr. Lyndsay.

"Could he see that esteemed friend, and *la charmante* M'lle Julie?"

"Mr. Lyndsay and Julia had unfortunately

gone on a long ride, and would not return till evening. Would not the Baron give them the pleasure of his company until the next day, at least?"

"No, he must return to the Springs the same evening; but might he engage the amiable services of Madame towards Mr. Lyndsay? Might he dare to hope that her all-powerful influence would be in his favor could he win the smiles of M'lle. Mathilde? Never had so profound an impression been made on his heart. Never, etc., etc., etc."

It is unnecessary to repeat the gentleman's ecstasies; suffice it to say that he won a consent from Mrs. Lyndsay, not too speedily bestowed, yet unreluctant; and as the well-balanced pair separated it would be hard to say which felt the most triumphant.

Matilda's sensations, when her suitor made his proposal in due form next morning, were very different from what they would have been a year and a half earlier. Believing him to be wealthy as well as titled, she thought the re-

newal of his attentions evinced a degree of disinterested attachment, that even she had not expected from him; for she did not imagine that he was ignorant of her changed prospects, the losses were so well known. She forgot that he was not in New York when her family left it.

Then he was so agreeable, seemed so amiable, and although she thought more seriously about it than she would have done formerly, there was a strange mixture of grateful feeling and gratified vanity in her heart, as she accepted him; and a still stranger dawning of regard that might have been deepened by kindness into genuine and lasting attachment.

Mrs. Spencer was delighted. Such a gratifying result of her invitation; she overwhelmed her dear Matilda with congratulations, and insisted that all arrangements for the wedding should be left to her. It must be at Saratoga —it would be such a brilliant *finale* to an unusually gay season. She would hear of no denial, and at last all parties consented. Affectionate letters were sent to the Sumners, from

Julia and Matilda, with a pressing invitation from Mrs. Spencer for the girls to visit her, at her cottage at the Springs.

Dr. Wood took Marion and Helen to Saratoga for a week, returning to New York the day after their cousin's marriage; and on the evening of their return home they were all assembled in Mrs. Sumner's parlor. Mary Lester and Frank Enfield had joined the family party, but they were now such familiar guests that their presence was no interruption to the questions and descriptions that formed the chief part of the conversation.

"It was really very pretty," said Helen. "There were six bridesmaids, the prettiest girls there: all dressed alike in white, trimmed with white rosebuds and blue ribbons. Matilda was all in white, of course, *tulle* over satin, with real orange flowers. Her veil was fastened by a coronet. I never saw her look so lovely. Aunt Lyndsay seemed perfectly happy, but Julia cried as if her heart would break. She did everything for Matilda, but she would not

be a bridesmaid. She said she could not command herself, and would only spoil the picture, and every one agreed with her."

"How did the bridegroom look?"

"Very polite and self-possessed, with a sort of triumphant satisfaction that some people thought very becoming; but Julia and I disliked his expression. Poor Julia! she is quite in despair about the marriage. She could hardly have grieved more at her sister's funeral."

"I hope it will not be so very bad," said Mary Lester. "I never really liked the gentleman, although, in our wild days, we thought it was something to receive the attentions of a titled foreigner; but he appeared to have a placid, cool temper, and to be extremely courteous, so that a person who did not seek much in domestic life might get on very comfortably with him."

"Julia says she thinks him utterly unprincipled; and when annoyed, although he is not violent, he has the bitterest sneer she ever saw. Besides, she is convinced that he believes

Matilda to be wealthy, and is merely fortune-hunting. If that is true, there will be little comfort for her when he finds it out."

"Why, every one says he is so rich!"

"He is always talking about his estates; but people begin to think that he lives by his wits; that all his '*chateaux*' are '*en Espagne!*'"

"Where have they gone first?"

"Out to the lakes, and so to Canada. They will probably be in Washington at the commencement of the session of Congress, and during the winter will go to Havana or New Orleans."

"Well, I hope our fears are all unfounded. Matilda is fond of change, and would be happiest in a sort of life that we should find very wearisome."

"Some of us used to like that sort of life, too," said Mary, with a half sigh and smile.

"But, Mary, you would not prefer it now."

"No," she said, thoughtfully, "it was endless excitement; but there was always some little annoyance. At any rate, the enjoyment was

not as genuine as I have now. After a busy day there is such rest and refreshing in an evening like this. Friends are better than acquaintances, Marion dear."

Oscar now came home. He said he had been finishing some letters, and he had managed to stay down town until the wedding was quite talked over. The past year, with its various griefs and changes, had aided him to overcome his regretful affection, and he could speak and even think of his cousin calmly. But there was a lingering reluctance to hear her marriage and prospects discussed, which he was glad to conceal even from himself, under the plea of pressing business.

But although he had escaped the especial reference to Matilda, he encountered an animated debate, on the most important constituents of a happy marriage, and of course each party called upon him for support. There was great diversity of opinion. Good principles being agreed to as the first qualification, there seemed to be no further common ground.

Helen declared for sympathy of taste. Milly, for similarity of temper.

Mary Lester for contrast of temper. "If I married any one as impetuous as I am, we should quarrel past all reconciling before the year was out."

"O, Mary, you are not bad-tempered," exclaimed Helen.

"Perhaps not, what is usually so called. I do not bear malice; but the most violent quarrels often occur between people of quick temper, generous enough on most occasions, but who go on exciting themselves and each other until they cannot bear the least allusion to the subject of dispute; and even sometimes learn to hate their opponent, if these dissensions are often renewed. If either party had spoken quietly at first, all trouble might have been prevented. I could not respect a man without energy, but it must be of the quiet sort, which always raises in my mind a feeling almost of reverence, a perception of powerful self-control."

"I must confess," said Cornelia, "that a restless, impulsive sort of energy impresses me far more; there is a strong life in some characters that seems to lift and carry my spirit out of, and beyond its own sphere, into a purer and higher atmosphere."

"And to such a character yours would form an excellent balance," returned Mary.

"Hardly," said Milly. "Cornelia is impulsive and enthusiastic enough herself, naturally; but she has learned to control her enthusiasm. Now, Oscar, what do you think about it?"

"I prefer some difference of tastes. It would make more variety; and I should wish my wife to have affection enough to enter into my pursuits, mind enough to appreciate all that is true and beautiful, and independence enough to have an opinion of her own."

"Fond enough of you to enjoy your company when she can get it, and independent enough to take care of herself," said Frank. "Now give me a wife who cannot take too good care of herself, but thinks my care the

best in the world, and who is ready to greet me with a happy face, at any hour in the four-and-twenty."

"You would not be content with a smiling wax doll, master Frank, any more than I should. You would wish your wife to have some sense."

"I have no objection to that," answered Frank, "provided always she will consider me as A. No. 1."

"How melancholy," sighed Helen, "to see so young a man such a confirmed egotist!"

This led to some good-natured banter on the subject of egotism and jealousy.

"Now, there's Marion," said Milly, "for all her dignity, would be as jealous and exacting as any one. Woe betide her poor husband if he bows very politely to any other lady."

Marion laughed, and said she certainly should not like him to bow as low to any one else as he did to her.

"Have you really a jealous disposition?"

"Rather, I'm afraid; but still I do not con-

sider jealousy any proof of strength of attachment."

"Most jealous persons do, I believe, and so justify it."

"I think, on the contrary, that it indicates a want of confidence in the affection or constancy of our friends, that seems inconsistent with the truest attachment."

"I believe you are right," said Mary. "I am always most inclined to be jealous of those whom I love, but am not sure of. But mamma will think I have forgotten that there is such a place as home."

Mrs. Lester's house was very near Dr. Wood's; so that when Mary had spent the evening at Mrs. Sumner's she generally walked home with the doctor and Marion, with whom she had formed a strong friendship.

Mary Lester was very much changed. Adversity had checked her in the career of dissipation she was pursuing, and roused all the noble qualities that were lying dormant in her soul. Her mother's weak health had thrown

the great burthen of cares upon Mary, whose high spirit seemed to take a sort of pleasure in meeting and overcoming difficulties. She was energetic and fearless, and her intercourse with society had given an ease and decision to her manner, with a ready insight into the characters of others, very unusual in one so young. She might have been in danger of growing imperious in manner, had she not possessed a most loving heart, and a frank, candid spirit, which could not rest under the thought of having given pain to any one she loved.

Mrs. Lester, who had feared her changed circumstances, more on Mary's account than her own, and that she would sink into repinings at the withdrawal from society which must ensue, was surprised and consoled to find that she had an unfailing comforter in her daugher, whom nothing seemed to discourage.

The next morning Marion was at work in the laboratory, when her uncle's old clerk handed her a recipe, which required much care in preparing. It was a peculiar and very

expensive medicine, and at the foot of the recipe were written a few words in Latin, which the patient would certainly suppose were the usual cabalistic signs; but which signified, "Charge the patient one-fourth, and the rest to me. Floyd."

As Marion finished the preparation, her uncle came in, and she handed it to him with the recipe. The doctor smiled.

"That is an old habit of Dr. Floyd's, when he has been called to some one who is really in straitened circumstances, yet removed out of the class of charity patients, and who need expensive medicines, which they are ill able to afford. A physician can, in such cases, avoid sending a bill; but he can rarely, in long-continued illness, furnish the medicines also, without wounding the feelings of his patient. So Floyd has frequently adopted this method with those whom he cannot serve more directly."

"What considerate kindness!" exclaimed Marion.

"Yes, he is one of the finest fellows I know

—very talented, and as kind-hearted as he is gifted. It is no unusual thing for him to watch all night by the bedside of some destitute sufferer, after a fatiguing day spent in the exercise of his profession."

And thus Marion first heard of Dr. Philip Floyd.

Now it so happened that Marion and her uncle had been making some curious and valuable chemical investigations, and as the doctor was exceedingly busy, he told Marion that he wished she would prepare an article on the subject, for the "Chemists' Monthly Chronicle." She understood it perfectly—having assisted him from the beginning of his experiments, and that she would describe them better than he would.

With less confidence in her own powers, Marion undertook the task, and completed it greatly to her uncle's satisfaction. About a week after it appeared, he was met in the street by Dr. Floyd, who, after talking a few moments, said,

"That was a splendid article of yours in the Chronicle, this month; it gave me just the information I was searching for on the subject."

"Glad you liked it; but I am sorry to add, I did not write it."

"No? Why, Smith told me he had it from you."

"So he did; but my assistant wrote it."

"Not old Clark? he hasn't head enough; it is so clear, so direct, and the style is so polished."

"Not Clark: my laboratory assistant."

"He must be a talented fellow; I should like to know him."

"Well, drop in almost any evening, and I'll introduce you; we take tea at seven."

"Thank you, I will be sure to come."

And thus Dr. Floyd first heard of Marion without knowing it.

Dr. Wood and Marion were playing chess, one evening, when Dr. Floyd called. He glanced round the room, but saw only the doctor and his niece; and being introduced to "My niece, Miss Sumner," sat down, feeling a little

disappointed at not seeing the person he expected.

He was not what is called a lady's man. Though perfectly courteous, he rarely sought ladies' society. He said he had not time; his friends said an early disappointment had changed him, for he used to like company. However this might be, he was certainly very agreeable to-night. Marion's tranquil self-possession put him at ease, and the conversation soon became animated.

From chess they spoke of the games of different nations, and how far they are illustrations of national character. From this they passed to music, poetry, literature and art, touching lightly on all, it is true, but with the familiar touch that bespeaks long habitude, and the abundant illustration of cultivated minds.

So perfectly did Dr. Floyd enjoy the evening, that he forgot the real purpose of his visit, until Dr. Wood was parting from him at the door.

"Your assistant is late to-night, doctor—it is

actually past twelve; I must hope to make his acquaintance some other evening."

"I thought you had got on pretty well to-night, for a first introduction," said Dr. Wood, dryly.

Floyd faced round suddenly. "What do you mean!—not that—it can't be possible that quiet girl wrote that paper; you are jesting."

"Not in the least, my good sir; I never knew before that noisy people were better chemists than quiet ones. Miss Marion Sumner has been my assistant for about a year and a half, and a most excellent one she is."

"No doubt, no doubt; but it is very strange."

"Only strange (like many other things in this world) because you know nothing about it."

"Do tell me how it happened?"

"Not to-night, thank you—it is quite time for busy people to be in bed; but I will some day."

And Dr. Floyd discovered during his walk home, that he had experienced more than one new sensation.

CHAPTER XI.

HOME PLEASURES.—UNFASHIONABLE MARRIAGE.

"And the nights shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And silently steal away."—LONGFELLOW.

A SUMMER evening in New York. After all that has been said and written about the beauty of the country, it may seem vain to claim aught for the city, scorned in poet's dream. Yet it has its charm too.

The sunlight fades slowly up the high walls, lingers a moment floating in the air, kisses a passing cloud, which answers with a golden smile—there—it is gone.

The sea-breeze comes from the bay with a cool freshness and a salt perfume that brings thoughts of a rocky shore and dashing spray, and a wide ocean swaying in the tranquil light.

High overhead, a solitary sea-bird utters his wild, plaintive cry.

The hurrying steps of the passers in the street grow slower, and fall soft and restful; and from afar some church bell sounds through the quiet evening air, rounding-in the circle of the busy day with thoughts of prayer, and thanks-giving, and peace, in God's protecting care.

The shadows close around the earth, the stars gather in the darkening sky, and the moon pours her white radiance over river, sea, and the hushed city.

To-night she touches the petals of a *cereus*, as the buds expand and the rich perfume breathes into the room. The white curtains are just lifted by the light air, the shaded lamps are turned low, and now, as the sound of the bell dies away, it is followed by a strain of melody that rises softly on the air like the voice of the flower.

Now the strain changes, other voices join the singer, and the music rises in a triumphant burst of song, then "fades into silence."

"How picturesque that song is!" says Esmond, after a pause—"so grandly suggestive; there are light and color, broad heathy uplands, mountains, and waterfalls, and an eagle soaring in the clear air."

"Did you ever paint pictures of melody?"

"Yes, many; but I never could satisfy myself. Nor do I believe that my ideas would agree with those of other people—music impresses persons so differently."

"O, Mr. Esmond," exclaims Helen, "do show them to us, and let us try to conjecture the suggesting melody."

There are few things that Esmond would refuse to his favorite pupil, and the sketches are produced.

The first represents the ruins of an ancient castle, crowning the summit of a rock, which descends on one side in an abrupt precipice; on the other, in a green slope to the verge of cliffs overhanging the sea. The atmosphere looks clear and cold above the scene of desolation; ivy grows over the broken walls and

ruined battlements; ferns and heath mingle with the grass on the plain. No tree is seen, except a blasted oak at the entrance of the ancient court; no living thing, save a hare sporting fearlessly among the ruins, and a hawk sailing overhead.

This Helen pronounced to be from "The Harp that once through Tara's Halls."

"You are right," says Esmond; "but you will find that many of these are irrespective of the words that have been adapted to the melodies, or of the habitual associations connected with them, and are merely my impressions from the music. For instance, I heard the overture from 'Le Serment.' I never heard the plot of the opera, or any more of the music, but this was the scene I saw in the opening strains."

It was a ruined chapel, on which the lightning shone, and the moon half-obscured by driving clouds. Weeds and shrubs grew among the broken monuments, a laurel waved above the tomb of a knight, and a wild lily

hung its fragrant bells over the sculptured form of a dead maiden. Before the altar were three persons—a knight and a lady, richly attired, knelt with clasped hands, and an aged priest extended one hand over them in benediction, while his other hand was raised, as lifted suddenly, in listening for some half-heard sound. In the distance, faintly seen in the dim light, a band of armed men were speeding towards the little chapel.

"How you must enjoy Beethoven's music!" exclaimed Cornelia; "that is the most suggestive of all."

"You may think it strange, but it is not so to me. I require melody; the harmony must be subordinate—the richer the better, of course, but melody is to me the poetic element in music. Therefore I delight in the Italian music: it is full of glowing tints, of perfume and southern air, of impulsive action and deep emotion. The melodies of Ireland generally convey a wild lamentation, a feeling of desolate grandeur, of deep regret—often of hopeless

despair. Even their merriest music has a wailing note here and there, as if the singer was but cheating his sorrow. Those of Scotland speak of bold and stern determination, not rash but resolute."

"And those of Switzerland?"—

"They are the very pæan of liberty, soaring and exultant; full of splendid scenery; lofty peaks, shining in clear light, with every shade of blue, and rose, and white; sounding cataracts and ringing echoes. You can see the springing *chamois*, the eagle's majestic flight. You can hear the horn and the lingering echo fading in the distance, and you feel that none but a free people could have such music."

"But what about the German school?"

"I hardly understand why myself," he answered, "but I do not like German music. The greater part of it seems to me so heavy—almost stolid. It calls up solemn old burghers, smoking long pipes and drinking beer. Of course, there are some grand and noble exceptions, but—

"But you acknowledge your heresy on that point."

"Yet you know it is all a matter of feeling with me. I know nothing of music scientifically."

"I do not think that necessary for its enjoyment," said she. "To use a sort of paradox, I often think those persons know most of music who know least about it."

'Thank you," said he, smiling. "I will take the benefit of your conclusion; but give me still another benefit therefrom, and sing for me."

While Cornelia sang, Helen went on turning over the sketches in the portfolio, and at last found some illustrations of the "Faery Queen," among which was a study of Una.

"How beautiful!" said Helen.

"Do you recognise any familiar face?" asked Esmond.

"Yes; an expression Cornelia has sometimes—a very peculiar, spiritual look: what Willis would call her inner countenance."

"I am glad I have succeeded: it was precisely that look I was trying to catch. She only has it when something touches her inmost feelings; it is a sort of unconscious out-looking of her soul."

"Perfectly unconscious," replied Helen. "I am sure she would not recognise the resemblance, as the features are altered."

When Cornelia had returned to the table, after Esmond had thanked her for her music, Helen showed her the sketches.

"Did you ever see a face like that Una?"

"Never; how lovely it is!"

"You enjoy the Faery Queen," said Esmond.

"Yes, indeed," she answered; and as she studied the sketch intently, the others exchanged glances, and smiled; for the same expression shone in Nela's eyes, and from the sweet face of the poet's Una.

While these three were thus occupied, and Mrs. Esmond and Mrs. Sumner holding a confidential and domestic talk, another conversation went on by the window, among the flow-

ers, under the still summer moonlight: low, eager questionings, and softly whispered replies, summed up emphatically in Frank Enfield's last words that evening,—

"My own Milly."

Not a little surprised was the loving foster-mother when this conclusion was made known to her next morning. She had always taken it for granted that her girls would marry some day, but had never realized any actual probability, and was little prepared to have it thus brought home to her by the youngest of her flock.

But there was no objection to be made; they were perfectly suited, and deeply attached to each other, and Frank's mother rejoiced in gaining such a daughter as Milly.

Yet among the members of the bride's family there is real sadness, notwithstanding their sympathy in her hopes and happiness. The first marriage among sisters who really love each other, is always painful, bright though the future may be. The first break in

the daily intercourse, the want of the familiar face, the empty place at table, or in the evening circle, the silence left for the beloved voice—these are ever present, and it is only the afterthought that whispers "But she is happy."

It was decided by the Sumners that their school should be given up. Cornelia gave lessons in music, and had as many scholars as she could attend to. Helen was fully occupied in engraving and miniature painting; and Marion permanently established with her uncle.

Mrs. Sumner's health was not so strong as in former days, and her children insisted that she should relinquish the fatigue of the school.

Oscar pleaded for his privilege as head of the family, that he should now support them, and that his sisters should be released from their labors. But this they would not listen to. They wished that he should feel at liberty to marry, if he chose, and considered it no hardship to aid in gaining an honorable independence. Oscar and Frank were now associated in business with Mr. Enfield, and the firm

was rising rapidly to the position it had occupied two years before.

Milly's marriage was delayed only until the final closing of the school. It was a quiet, unostentatious wedding, and Mrs. Enfield entreated that the young bride would live with her.

"I have no daughter," she said, "and am so lonely."

So when summer was gone, and the autumn leaves began to fall through the misty air, Milly departed to be the light and gladness of another home.

Great was the amazement among their more fashionable friends, at Frank Enfield's marriage.

"Just think of that handsome young man marrying such a common-place looking little thing as that Miss Boylston," said Mrs. Bradshaw—who thought, or called every one common-looking who had a shade of color in their cheeks, and who had coveted Frank's property for her Amelia or Fanny, both of whom were as distinguished and elegant looking as late

hours, expensive dress, and vinegar diet could make them.

"She is good-looking enough," said Mrs. Selden; "but who was she? Brought up for charity, I believe."

Certainly Milly's sunny temper could not weigh for a moment against Miss Kate Selden's aristocracy of birth, and hopes of fortune.

"I think Frank Enfield has shown good taste and good judgment," said Addy Lee, with spirit. "From Mary Lester's description, his bride must be perfectly charming."

"We all know you will swear by anything Mary Lester says, Addy; and really I wonder that your mother allows you to visit her, now, when she keeps a boarding-house."

"Every one was ready to visit her when she was rich, and gave pleasant parties," retorted Addy; "and she is far better worth visiting now. She is a high-minded, noble girl, who could make any position honorable."

A slight indescribable lifting of the eyebrows, and movement of the shoulder, was all

she answer Mrs. Selden vouchsafed to Addy's impetuous defence.

But Mrs. Bradshaw felt herself also touched, for she had suffered her intimacy with the Lesters to die out entirely, since they were "out of society;" and her sneer was scarcely as covert as courtesy required, as she said,—

"I envy your generous temper, Miss Lee. Few are so entirely free from jealousy, or could be content to be second even to a Mary Lester. Have you no fears for your future?"

"No, indeed, Mrs. Bradshaw. Mr. Smith first won my respect by the refined courtesy of his attentions to Mary, and his genuine appreciation of her value."

Addy Lee's straightforwardness was more than a match for her opponents, and for awhile she and Mary Lester were let alone.

It was true, Mr. Smith's chivalry had won his bride. She was not so gifted as Mary, nor did she possess her powerful intellect and energy, but she was not deficient in sense; was amiable and warm-hearted, and far better suited to Mr

Smith (as he already was convinced), than the loftier nature that had at first captivated his fancy.

He had told her honestly of his first love and disappointment, but his subsequent kindnesses he did not speak of, and when Mary told her the whole story, good Mr. Smith became a very hero in the eyes of his fair betrothed, thenceforward through her whole life.

There was one person who was beginning to look upon Miss Lester with very different eyes. Oscar Sumner had unconsciously adopted Matilda Lyndsay's view of her character, and considered her a vain and rather haughty girl, whose only attractions were her beauty, and a sort of dashing independence of manner that enabled her to say things that no one else would dare to utter.

Now he began to understand her truly. Her character, subdued by the discipline of life, had acquired a dignified repose, refining, not impairing, its power.

The constant demands made on her sympa-

thy, by her invalid mother, had quickened her affections, rendering her gentle, considerate, and watchful of the comfort of others.

It was a constant attraction to Oscar to examine and elicit her tastes and opinions.

Her original mind seized new aspects of any subject under observation. His, slower but more profound, patient in analysis, unwearied in investigation, was roused into new life by the revelations, as it were, made by her more vivid perception, and gradually he formed a sort of habit, of bringing his impressions and experiences to examine them by this new light.

So, slowly but surely, a deep attachment was striking root in these two hearts, once apparently so utterly beyond the sphere of mutual influence.

What an amusing variety is displayed in the mode of performing that common (or uncommon) process, called "falling in love."

While the two just mentioned were walking in, in the quietest way, Doctor Floyd was startled from a tranquillity gained by long

continued effort, to find that his happiness was no longer in his own keeping. An early and most painful experience had destroyed, not his faith in woman, as might have been the case with a feebler spirit, but his faith in his own future.

He was no dreamer. He believed that he had risked all—and lost all; that a love-lighted home could never be his; and devoting himself to the practical duties of life, with all the ardor of his vehement nature, he had resolved to seek therein his only happiness.

This delusion had strengthened year by year, till at last, suddenly dispelled, he saw how he was capable of feeling a truer and worthier love than that first wild dream of passion, and hope scarcely realized a sense of possible joy in store for him; a vague but ineffable gladness dawned softly on the darkness of his heart's slumber. He was not one

> "Who fears to put it to the touch,
> To win or lose it all."

One evening he had been talking with Miss

Sumner about a novel lately issued, the plot of which gave him precisely the opening he desired

"Then you believe, Miss Sumner, that first love is not always the only love."

"I believe," said she, smiling, "that such characters as the hero and heroine of that book, could love just as well half a dozen times, and that there are plenty of good people in the world of the same moderate capacity."

"But stronger natures—those who can feel genuine, deep love?"

"I think there is a love that can only be experienced once; and that having once been felt no after affection can replace."

"But if misplaced; if a person has been deceived?"

"I can imagine a person loving, and finding after all, that they had loved an ideal, not the being they had invested with false attributes; and the possibility of such a one afterward loving rightly and truly."

"And would such love content you?"

There was a tremulous eagerness in his tone, that made Marion look up surprised, but her eyes fell under the burning gaze that met her.

"Oh, Marion, do not answer hastily. Let me tell you all, and then judge whether I may ever hope to win what has become dearer to me than life. I have loved before; most intensely loved a beautiful girl whom I knew in my youth. She had the most perfect face, as far as outline and color went, that I ever beheld; and her large dark eyes could look full of soul. There was one thing that might have, in some measure, undeceived me. Her voice, carefully trained as it was, remained cold even in its lowest tones. There was not a heart-note in it.

"Well, I loved her, and of course thought her perfection. I was studying my profession, and was considered promising, and a good match; she was the child of worldly people, who were known to live far beyond their means. She had many admirers, but few

suitors: in the company she kept a portionless girl was not easily married.

"We agreed that after my admission I should go to the west, and as soon as I was well established should return for her. How I labored during those three years! They were years of incessant, unwearied toil; cheered alone by the prospect that hope held constantly before me. We corresponded, and precious as I held those letters, I found myself excusing, even to my own mind, a something felt to be wanting; yet they were affectionate letters, full of all that should have been satisfying.

"At last the term of probation was over. I had prepared a home for her, and had a steadily increasing practice among people who liked and trusted me.

"All was ready, the day of our marriage fixed, and I was writing a last letter to announce my journey to bring home my bride.

"In that very hour I received her wedding cards! She had been married a week, to a man I had often heard her ridicule—whom I knew

she despised; narrow-minded, ill-educated, unprepossessing in appearance, he had but one recommendation—he had lately fallen heir to an immense fortune.

"I could not, rather, I would not, believe it. I hurried to the city, to find it was but too true; and worse, that I was not the only one she had deceived.

"With no other person had she gone so far; but there was more than one, who had good reason to believe that he was the favored suitor of the heartless girl, whose vanity *would* be gratified whoever might suffer.

"I never saw her again. It seemed an overwhelming misery; and it was long, very long, ere my ideal rose again bright and pure above the ruins of the broken idol I had so long vainly worshipped. I believed that my heart was dead, that no love could ever bid it throb again, at the voice of any woman breathing. But I have learned at last to know that it is not so. I have found in you all that I had believed lost to me for ever. Hopes and dreams have

risen in my heart, with brighter radiance than ever before. Marion, I know you are true; may I, dare I hope to win your love? If that cannot be, I shall still love you, and you only, to the end of my life. But if—ah, Marion, grant me one word to decide my fate."

How that decision was pronounced, it were needless to tell.

Doctor Wood for once did not see Marion ready to meet him when he came home that evening, and his first greeting next morning was,

"So, I must look out another assistant! But you have chosen well, my darling," he added, as he kissed her cheek, "God bless you both."

CHAPTER XII.

THE AMERICAN LIFE OF A FOREIGN ADVENTURER.

"Who will believe that, with a smile whose blessing
Would, like the patriarch's, soothe a dying hour;
With voice as low, as gentle and caressing
As e'er won maiden's lip in moonlit bower;
With look like patient Job's, eschewing evil,
With motions graceful as a bird's in air—
Thou art, in sober truth, the veriest devil."

HALLECK.

GASPARD DE BRIE was a man of politic nature, fond of scheming, cool and unimpressible, but polished in manner, with imperturbable self-possession, and a power of assuming the appearance of any degree of enthusiasm which he judged necessary for the occasion. He resolved to trust for awhile to his own resources before drawing any part of his wife's supposed large fortune—believing that she would probably receive only an allowance during her

father's life, and her share of his property at his death.

Fierce was his rage and disappointment at the discovery of the truth; and the spell of his wife's beauty was too feeble to bind him to her when the more potent charm was wanting. The reputation of having married an heiress was of some service to him, and even this advantage made it worth while to keep up the appearance of a good understanding. He treated her with politeness in public, but in private indulged himself in sneers and harsh words, although he refrained from any further ill-treatment.

Poor Matilda was no less disappointed. Her imagination had supplied her husband with many attributes to which he could lay no claim. As yet she had no suspicion of his real character; but one by one her hopes deserted her.

The summer and fall were spent at various watering-places, and Matilda endeavored to conceal, even from herself, her growing unhap-

piness, by entering into the busy idleness of fashionable life, as if she fancied she could banish reflection and grief for ever, instead of only deferring their dreaded approaches. As a bride, a Baroness, and a supposed heiress, she would have attracted attention; but when to all these were added beauty, a graceful manner, and a fine and well cultivated voice, the admiration she excited was almost unbounded.

Trained all her life for display, it was only natural that she should feel pride and pleasure in the homage of all around her—a pleasure increased by the evident effect it produced on her husband. He became more assiduous, more desirous of pleasing her and adding to her comfort, and at last revived in her mind a faint hope that all was not lost.

The fact was, that he had suddenly conceived a project in which her co-operation was necessary, and for which it was no less needful that she should have no idea of the aid she was affording.

He had never undeceived her with regard

to his real position, and she believed him to be in the receipt of a large income from his French estates, but compelled to reside here for political reasons. The gay and lavish life they were leading was certainly not calculated to undeceive one who had never looked below the surface. Her letters to her mother and sister were filled with descriptions of balls, pleasure parties, sojourns of a few weeks at a time here and there; and at last she wrote that they were going to New Orleans.

"Here," she said, "we expect to reside for the future. Of course, we shall visit the north during the heat of summer; but this will be our home."

Julia sighed as she read, to think how little Matilda could ever know of the happiness that little word might convey.

Succeeding letters told of their establishment.

"An old friend of my husband, having lost his wife within the last few months, has consented to let us occupy the apartments origi-

nally furnished for her use. I am surrounded by every luxury that wealth and taste can give: the arrangements are faultlessly superb. I have my own attendants, and all the comfort of a private house, with the freedom of a hotel. Our meals are served in our own dining-room. My parlors are thronged nightly with cheerful guests. I rarely see the master of the house, except when he occasionally spends an hour with us in the early part of the evening. I have many acquaintances, but no friends: still —I do not need them. I am happy. I do not, will not think of what might—of what I might have been."

While Mrs. Lyndsay was congratulating herself on the brilliant position thus occupied by her daughter, the Baron and his confederate felt by no means so well satisfied; and long and anxious were their consultations how best to profit by their present advantages.

"I tell you, De Brie, this cannot last much longer."

"Have patience, *mon ami;* have patience."

"Yes, yes, it is always 'have patience,' but we want something else. Where is this great fortune of madame's? We must begin to open our rooms this very night."

"By degrees, Brousseau; be cautious. Open all your rooms—have tables only in one."

"That is all I can do; and where am I to get funds for the bank?"

"I will provide those, Brousseau."

"You, indeed!" exclaimed the other, with a sarcastic laugh.

De Brie silently handed over a roll of bank-bills.

"Ah!" exclaimed Brousseau, seizing them eagerly, "where did you get this?"

"The first instalment of madame's fortune," answered De Brie, carelessly, as he rose and sauntered out of the room.

Brousseau looked after him with a fierce expression.

"The scoundrel!" he muttered; "he would cheat me too."

The Baroness held a reception that evening.

She had collected round her a fashionable society. No entertainments were more popular than hers, and, in consequence, she numbered among her visitors many of the most dashing men about town. Brousseau came in to pay his respects, and after exchanging a few polite phrases with his hostess, the usual extent of their intercourse, he wandered off though the rooms. His keen eye scrutinized each face as he passed, with a rapid, marking glance; some he bowed to, again he spoke a few words, at last he saw a young man leaning against one of the open windows, whom he greeted rather more cordially.

"Ah, Brousseau, out of your hermitage. It's awfully slow here; couldn't we have a game!"

"Not here," answered Brousseau; "madame does not play on our instruments, if it *is* a *soirée musicale*."

"Well, can't we make up a party in your rooms presently? I think there are others here who find all this as much of a bore as I do."

"I shall be honored," said Brousseau, with an indifferent smile; "as soon as you will."

By degrees several of the gentlemen took leave, and descended to Brousseau's apartments; and ere long this became habitual. Matilda knew nothing of the arrangements of the establishment outside her own rooms, and she was for many months unaware that the hour or two spent in her *salon* was but the prelude to a night of deep play, and that her beauty and attractiveness were used by her unprincipled husband to bring within his influence those whom he could reach in no other way.

Month by month the golden harvest was gathered in. It was a year of prosperity; and De Brie and his associate sorely grudged the interruption caused by the trip northward to escape the heats of summer.

Matilda pleaded for a visit to her home. Her letters thence had almost ceased; and when she did receive any, they were most unsatisfactory. A few hasty lines with promise of more news that never came; a half reproach

for her silence or want of confidence, most unjust, she felt; for her letters grew longer and fuller, and more earnest in their affection, as her secret regret and dissatisfaction augmented. But her husband would not consent to her visiting Montiluna. Why, she could not understand; but she found it was vain to expostulate.

On her return to New Orleans in the fall, the life of the previous winter was renewed; but she felt there was a change—painful, yet undefinable. There seemed to be no great difference: some of the ladies with whom she had been most intimate had left the city, perhaps that was all; but their places were not supplied. Her husband's manner grew more moody. He rarely remained more than a few minutes in her rooms on her reception nights, which he insisted on her holding regularly.

A vague terror, as of some impending fate, weighed on her spirits, unfitting her alike for society or for solitude. Her only consolation was in writing to her mother and sister; but even this seemed failing, and at last all com-

munications from them ceased entirely. In vain she implored some explanation, some word of sympathy; they seemed to have forgotten, or utterly cast her off.

She wrote to the Sumners to obtain some information, but received no reply.

At last the crisis of her suffering came, but in a form wholly unlooked for.

Among her most constant visitors was a young man named Victor Artaud, of good family, and peculiarly engaging character. His parents were dead; and being still a minor, he was the ward and heir-presumptive of an uncle by whom he had been educated, and who treated him as the chief treasure of his old age, supplied him lavishly with money, and trusted him implicitly.

This confidence was not ill-placed. The young man had a keen sense of honor, and a generous disposition, and returned his uncle's love with grateful devotion.

Victor's joyous temperament, his love for music, and frank, chivalrous bearing, soon made

him a great favorite with Matilda. She looked forward to his visits as her chief pleasure in her wearying receptions; and he treated her as an older sister, giving her his boyish confidences, and asking advice on many little points of social etiquette, with which he was yet unfamiliar.

During this second winter Matilda noticed a great change in his manner. He became restless and absent-minded, often reserved, and only resumed his old character in some long conversation. Often he would look at her with a strange piercing gaze, as if he would read her inmost thoughts; and if she spoke of his altered ways, would turn off the inquiry with a jest. Often he would stay away for weeks, until her persuasions would induce him to resume his visits.

She never dreamed that her husband had marked him for a victim; that he had been induced to play, and night after night had lost large sums, until, resolving to break off at once, he would determine to visit her no more. But,

once brought within reach of the fascinations of the gaming-table, he seemed unable even to struggle for freedom.

One night her guests had taken leave early, and, absorbed in painful thoughts and vague forebodings, she walked slowly up and down the now silent rooms. Splendid and brilliantly lighted as they were, they wore the indescribable look of desolateness that always falls over rooms lately left by a merry party. The open piano, the harp leaning against the ottoman, vibrant no longer to the artist hand; the music lying in disordered heaps; chairs drawn in groups, mockingly suggestive of the friendly forms that occupied them so short a while ago; books open on the table, but the soft fluttering leaves are still; wearisome as may have been the party, and glad as the tired hostess may be of rest and quiet—the place looks cheerless at the moment of the last departure.

So the unhappy Baroness felt a deeper shadow on her heart, though perhaps unacknowledged, from the aspect of all around her; and her sad

musings took a hundred varying shapes, true, but in one respect—her own wretchedness and desolation.

An hour had passed unheeded, when turning, as her slow steps reached the upper end of the saloon, she was startled by the sudden entrance of Victor. How could so short a time have wrought such a change? He was deathly pale, and his whole appearance that of one who endures unspeakable anguish. Shocked and alarmed, she hurried towards him.

"Victor, my poor boy! what has happened?"

Victor turned to her fiercely. Maddened by rage, shame, and self-reproach, he did not stop to consider what was true or false, but all he had heard, and seen, and suffered, found words —bitter, blighting words, that, like some unholy charm, revealed to her at once the fearful secrets of her splendid prison-house.

"Ah, cruel *siren!* this is your work! I am lost, ruined—and by you. I have fled from you, avoided you, and you have lured me back again, to fall into the hands of those who trade

in honor and in life! They know how precious you are; how your voice, your smile, your beauty can attract such fools as I have been to their accursed haunt: and well they know how to seal the ruin of all who once fall into their net."

"Victor!" she exclaimed, in terror, "what do you mean? Are you mad? or what has happened?"

"Yes, I am mad—lost! Do you not really know? Are you alone, of all in this wide city, ignorant that your husband and Brousseau keep a gambling-house, a hell! and that these fair shows are but the shining gates that lead to that awful perdition."

She looked at him as he spoke with eyes dilating in horror, her cheeks and lips as white as ashes; and as he ceased she breathed a long, shuddering sigh, and fell back as if dead.

Her fall recalled Victor to himself, and, blaming his precipitate rashness, he raised her, and sprinkled water on her forehead, and, kneeling by her as she revived, he implored her to pardon his cruel thoughtlessness.

"I have nothing to pardon, poor Victor!" she replied. "You were scarcely conscious of what you were saying; but I feel it must be true—it makes all clear. Now tell me, as plainly as you can, all that has occurred."

She rose up, calm and pale, put the damp curls from her face, and walking to the window, let the cool night air blow freshly into the heated room; then returning, she sat down opposite to him, saying,

"Now tell me all."

Her stillness quieted him, and he related the oft-told, sad history. How, first induced to look on, and see high play, he had become so fascinated that he could not resist trying his luck. He told of small winnings and heavy losses, of the frequent endeavor to draw out of the vortex, and of the irresistible enchantment when once in the fatal saloon.

This evening his destroyers had made a special effort; for a rich prize was in view, and it would be their last opportunity.

Victor's uncle wished him to travel in Europe,

to improve some parts of his education, and to make the acquaintance of several of his mother's relatives, among whom was a young lady to whom he had been partly betrothed in childhood—a marriage greatly desired by both families. On this day Mr. Artaud had received a large remittance from one of his agents, and this sum he gave to Victor to deposit in the bank for his expenses while abroad.

"You can have more, if needful; this is for your first drafts. All your preparations are now made, my dear Victor, and you can sail next week."

When Victor reached the bank he found it closed, and as he turned away he met Brousseau.

"Too late for a deposit, my dear fellow?"

"Yes," answered Victor. Then, after a few minutes' silence, thinking he had responded too abruptly to his friend's query, he added, "Have you any commands for France, Brousseau? I am going next week."

"So!" returned the other; "what now—business or pleasure?"

"Business *and* pleasure," said Victor, smiling.

"Good: have you made your adieux to Madame la Baronne?"

"Not yet; but I will ere I leave the city."

"Better to-night," said Brousseau: "she goes up the river to-morrow for a fortnight; and in the meantime I want your opinion on some pistols and other fancy articles."

Victor thought, as he must make one last visit, it was of small consequence when; and sauntered round with Brousseau until it was time to make their appearance in the lady's apartments.

Once there, it was easy to keep him occupied until the tables were filled in Brousseau's rooms; and Victor, who was chafing at receiving only a passing bow and smile from Matilda, and was unable to manage a single moment to bid her farewell, was at last carried off to take a parting glass of wine to his "*bon voyage.*" Some of his *friends* also insisted on one last game; and after a half-hour's play, Victor laid a bill on the table, saying,

"That is my farewell stake. I am played out;—that's gone too."

"You miser!" exclaimed his opponent, with a laugh, seizing the pocket-book, which, in his eagerness, Victor had dropped on the table. "Played out, with such a bookful of bills?"

"That belongs to my uncle," said Victor.

"But it is for your exclusive use," said Brousseau. "What does it matter if you use part for one pleasure or another?"

"And there," added another, "your color has come up twice running while you have been losing time."

It was long before Victor yielded to take just one note; but one led to many, and he rose from the table penniless, desperate, and dishonored.

And all this sad story he told with the passionate eloquence of grief and despair—now breaking out into bitter self-reproaches, now into invective against those who had destroyed him, and walking to and fro in his feverish anguish and unrest. And through all, that pale

woman sat calm and silent, with clasped hands lying on her lap, and white lips firmly closed, as if turned to stone, but for the glittering, eager fire in the watchful eyes. And when all was told, she still sat motionless, watching the unhappy boy, who, exhausted by the emotions of the past few hours, threw himself by the window, and laid his head on the sill, where the air swept over him as on healing wings.

At last she spoke. "Poor Victor!" she said: and Victor started at the sound of her voice; started, as if all this while he had in his own grief forgotten hers—so immeasurably deeper.

"Ah, forgive me!" he exclaimed; "forgive my selfishness in speaking so to you, my kind friend, my kind sister;" and he came and knelt beside her. "Dear lady, do you, can you forgive me?"

"Poor Victor!" she again said, sighing, "I have nothing to forgive. I ought to have known all this before: it is best I know it now.

You will never seek the gaming table, again, poor boy!"

"Never, never! The experience of this night has changed me for ever: but all is not over yet. What is to come—what is before me—how shall I tell my uncle? How shall I restore what I have—? O, that it were morning, that I might know my fate!"

"You will tell your uncle all, Victor?"

"All, all; how can I spare myself? it is my first hope of peace. And then I will strive to begin a new life; I will toil, and win a way for myself; I will pay all—" He could not finish the sentence that was on his lips.

Her resolve was taken, too. So when Victor was calmer she let him go, after finding out the hour when he usually saw his uncle.

As Matilda entered her room, she looked round her with a strange, weary feeling, as if it were years since she had left it; all was so changed within her. The girlish vanities, the emulations of society, the glamour of fashion, were gone for ever. A real grief, a bitter

anguish, had anointed the aching eyes, and she saw the world around her in its true colors—its false, sinful mockery.

She woke her maid (who had long been sleeping peacefully) with a sort of reluctance, as if sleep, quiet sleep, were a holy charm that she had no right to break during its consecrated hours; as if for such irreverence, she should be doomed to sleep no more.

She let the girl unfasten her jewels, and unbraid the long, soft tresses, and then dismissed her, with a sense of relief from some undefined oppression. She drew a large easy-chair to the window, and, too exhausted to think or feel, sat looking out into the night. The soft sounds, the sweet, murmuring life of the autumn night, the pure, dewy air—all breathed such repose and peace, that insensibly she was tranquillized; and ere the midnight voices faded into the hush that precedes the dawn, her eyes closed, and she slept.

CHAPTER XIII.

A WRECK.

"Not for me, that hear aghast
The solemn moaning of the past!
Wrecks might line the wasteful sand,
Treasures heaped on every hand:
I should only—ah! that only!
Is there anything so lonely?
See the golden argosy
Which in youth went down with me!"

R. H. STODDARD.

MR. ARTAUD pushed away the cup and spoon he had been playing with, as he read the morning paper, and held out his hand to his nephew.

"Ah, my dear Victor, glad to see you. Have you breakfasted? Yes? Well, ring the bell, have these things cleared away, and tell me the news."

But as the old man spoke he saw Victor's face more distinctly, and said no more until

the servant had removed the breakfast tray and closed the door; while Victor sat looking at the paper, of which he read not one single word.

"Now, my son, what has happened?"

The kind, anxious tone nearly overcame the youth's fortitude, but he told his story bravely, neither sparing nor excusing himself, even where excuse would have been justifiable—hiding not one act of weakness or folly, even to what he called his most cruel and unmanly conduct to Matilda, the night before. In his genuine repentance, his uncle perceived that he rather exaggerated his faults, and easily read, as Matilda had done, in his conduct of the previous night, only an outbreak of excessive excitement and remorse.

"Uncle," said Victor, at last, "I do not yet expect your forgiveness, only give me an opportunity of winning it; but do not cast me from your affection. Let me have some position, I care not how humble and laborious, wherein I may prove how sincerely I repent;

where, in time, I may hope to repay the sum I have robbed you of. Let me hope one day to regain your old loving confidence. I do not say that I cannot reform without that hope, for I will strive even if it be withheld; but it will take from my toil all its bitterness."

At this moment a servant entered and gave a card to Mr. Artaud, who had not as yet spoken one word. He glanced at the card, and closed his fingers on it; then, turning to his nephew, he said—

"Victor, wait here until I return, and we will see what can be done."

The words were few, perhaps cold enough; but the voice spoke no harshness, the eye no condemnation; and as the old man left the room he left two consolers to banish from Victor's heart the last trace of despair, and while deepening his repentance, to brighten all his future gratitude and hope.

It was a perfect room, that small library where Mr. Artaud found his early visitor. The windows opened directly into a garden full of

flowering trees and shrubs, with breaks of smooth grass between, leading down to a fountain in the centre of a group of orange-trees. But the lady seemed to see nought of the fair scene before her; and the clear morning light shone full on a face scarcely to be recognised as that of the brilliant beauty of the day before. The gentle eyes looked larger and darker, and wore a new expression of determination; every shade of color was gone from lip and cheek, and the graceful animation of her manner was replaced by a cold tranquillity, as of one to whom life can bring neither hope nor fear.

After the first greeting she began, abruptly—

"Mr. Artaud, you have seen Victor this morning?"

"Yes," he replied; "and he would gladly apologize, did he know how, for his almost unpardonable conduct last night."

She raised her hand deprecatingly.

"There is no apology needed. It was easy to see that he hardly knew what he was say-

ing, and he did not believe all he said—at least, when he came to himself. And yet, Mr. Artaud, he told me truths—the more severe and terrible, that all the world knew, except myself, the fearful *rôle* I was unconsciously playing. Oh," she exclaimed, bitterly, "was there not one friend to tell me!"

The transient feeling was quickly subdued.

"As the chief agent in your nephew's delinquency, Mr. Artaud, you must permit me to repair his error as far as possible; to restore in one way the ill-won gains of—of—M. De Brie. These jewels are mine—I entreat you to apply them to repair Victor's losses; and I implore you not to suffer this fall of his to interfere with your designs respecting his journey. This lesson will be a safeguard to him; your forgiveness more effectual than any punishment; and his removal from this dreadful place will separate him from his tempters. You do not speak. Ah, Mr. Artaud! you do not believe me a willing agent in all this villany?"

The old man gazed upon her with the deepest

compassion, and as she arose from her chair and approached him, in the earnestness of her pleading, he rose also, and, taking her hand kindly and respectfully, he said—

"My dear lady, my poor child, no one could believe such things of you. You are right in your opinion of Victor, and I thank you for your kind judgment of him. I will not change my arrangements; he shall go next week, as we intended. As for this"—he laid his hand on the jewel box—"it is impossible, do not pain me by urging it. I can assure you we have not suffered even temporary inconvenience. Let me tell you of Victor's purposes."

As Matilda returned home from this visit she had made with such dread, she felt that a new friend was raised up for her, in Victor's kind uncle.

She determined to withdraw at once from taking any part in the festivities of that house, on which she now looked with such horror; and, if possible, to induce her husband to let her return to the north. But she had many

weary hours before her, ere she could even attempt to carry out her wishes. She did not see her husband sometimes for days together, and on this occasion he did not enter her apartments until the afternoon fixed for her next reception.

She sat in her usual place by the window, and the sound of her husband's step called an eager brightness to her eyes, though the pale cheek was as colorless as it had been since that fatal night.

As Gaspard De Brie's eyes fell on her, he started and approached her with a sort of interest.

"Good evening, Mathilde; you are ill!"

"No, I am well enough, thank you, Gaspard."

"If well, why not at your toilet! Our friends will be here in an hour."

"I cannot see any one to-night." She hesitated a moment, then raising herself she looked beseechingly in his face—"Gaspard, will you send me home?"

He looked sternly into her eyes, and answered deliberately, "No. Pray when have you heard from 'home,' as you call it?"

"Not for a year," she sighed.

"You have taken some time to grow homesick for those who have so long forgotten you. Now I will call Celeste."

"I can see no one to-night," she repeated, faintly.

"You must, madame."

The careless command roused her, and she sprang up.

"I will not," she repeated, "to-night, or ever again! I know all now, Gaspard—how you live, your connexion with Brousseau, how you have degraded me in the eyes of the world; and knowing all, I will not be any longer a party to such villany. I enter those rooms no more as hostess; and if you compel me I will declare what you are, and why I am brought there."

Amazed and confounded at this burst of indignation, he stood silent for an instant, then

advanced fiercely towards her, with what purpose he himself hardly knew.

She did not give way one step, but confronted him, pale and resolute, with her burning eyes fixed unshrinkingly on his.

A thousand thoughts flashed across his mind in a moment; convictions of her sincerity, of her indifference to consequences, fears of her revenge, and uncertainty of how much she knew, mingled with his rage against her, and his desire for vengeance. It was but a moment; his habitual caution prevailed, and, uttering an imprecation, he said—

"Then these rooms are your prison till you die!" and left the room, locking the door behind him.

When Victor called two days after, to bid her farewell, he was told that she was very ill with brain fever; and in a few weeks it was reported among her acquaintances that the fever had left her hopelessly, though harmlessly, insane.

A few words of sympathy and regret, and

then the waves closed over her; and Gaspard De Brie rejoiced in his successful falsehood, in his lingering revenge.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

"Out of my last home, dark and cold,
I shall pass to the city whose streets are gold:
From the silence that falls upon sin and pain,
To the deathless joy of the angels' strain.
Well shall be ended, that ill begun,
Out of the shadow into the sun!"

Mrs. Lyndsay sat in the kitchen of the old farm-house at Montiluna—her hands busily employed in some coarse sewing, her thoughts no less busy over the web of life that lay outspread in all its changeful hues in the still chamber of memory.

The years she had spent beneath this roof were painfully dark to her unchastened heart, wearing but one gleam of brightness, in the thought of her Matilda's "brilliant marriage;" and even this was clouded by her unaccountable silence, and the fear that in her splendor

she had grown ashamed of the narrow circumstances of her family. In Mrs. Lyndsay's mind there was a strange mingling of bitterness at this supposed forgetfulness, or rather neglect, and of apology for what she considered was scarcely to be wondered at; and she glanced round her with the thought—"This is, indeed, no place for the Baroness de Brie. Yet she might have had Julia with her for a while: I counted on her aid in getting Julia married. How will that ever be, shut up here as she is? What can I do with her? True, Amy wanted to have her visit New York; but what would a marriage be in their set?"

She sighed heavily, and as the door opened she looked up with such an expression of distress, that Julia came hastily forward, exclaiming,—

"Mamma, what has happened?"

"Nothing new, Julia; I was only thinking what you could do."

"Do, mamma?" exclaimed Julia, brightening; "anything, if you will let me. I could get

a class in a week, to teach French and music, that would make us quite comfortable."

"Nonsense," exclaimed her mother, angrily. "How often must I tell you I will hear of nothing of the kind. Why will you persist in wishing to lower us for ever in the eyes of the world?"

"All the world that know anything about us now, mamma, would think none the less of us; and we should be so much better off. Look at my cousins."

"Yes, Marion has married well; but Cornelia and Helen are almost old maids now, with no prospect of anything better."

"But they are happy and independent. Cornelia has as many scholars as she wants, and Helen has acquired fame, as well as money, by her miniatures. I alone am idle and useless."

"You are no one's servant, Julia; your time and talents are your own."

"Mother," she answered, bitterly, "you are sadly mistaken. I am the slave of the world's opinion—every hour, every moment, almost

every thought, confined in the oppressive bondage; and you, my mother, whom I implore for help to gain my freedom, only bind the fetters closer."

"Let me hear no more of this. I am sick of these new notions of woman's rights and emancipation. No good ever came of casting down the landmarks of society. If there are to be no superior classes, or if these do not guard their position and privileges, we shall degenerate into a nation of boors and laborers. A lady is a lady, even in the narrowest circumstances. Once let her work for her living, and she is hopelessly degraded. What gentleman of wealth or fashion would marry a hireling?"

"Marriage is not always happiness, mother."

"Perhaps not; but it is position. A married woman has many privileges that a single one has not. Every one must have some trouble; she need not display hers."

"But, mamma! to be bound for life, for instance, to a man one can never love."

"Nonsensical romance! How many married

people have you ever seen who are 'in love,' as you young ladies call it? And they get on just as well without."

Silenced, but unconvinced, Julia said no more: but she felt that there was something more in life than all this; something more in love than romantic folly; something more in marriage than a contract for mutual aggrandizement; and something more in a single life than useless cynical repining. That true nobility of soul was not dependant on outward circumstance; that there was a narrowing and embittering power in this jealous watchfulness of rights and privileges—this brooding over fancied slights—this doubt of any good or happiness, except in the light of the world's favor.

Her mother's voice roused her from her reverie. "Here comes Gretchen from the village, Julia; go and look for your father. We shall have tea soon."

Julia set off for her solitary walk. For some months this had been her almost daily errand.

Whether from long continued anxiety previous to his failure, or from the complete change of life and occupation, Mr. Lyndsay had declined slowly ever since his return to the homestead. The farm was badly managed or neglected. This was at first attributed to want of knowledge; but as time passed on, it became evident to all that the old man's work was done.

Inscrutable as Mrs. Lyndsay deemed her domestic economy and household ways, they were perfectly understood in the village, and talked of with a freedom she never permitted, even to herself. But with all this curiosity, and in spite of the "queer high ways" of the family, there was a vast amount of genuine sympathy in many kindly hearts—sympathy which led them even to pardon the pride of these strangers in their fallen fortunes.

Mrs. Peters began to excuse the rejection of her early overtures, when she saw how bad things began to look about the place.

"Like enough they hadn't much heart for any sort of frolickin';" and she "kind-er thought

that corn patch would have looked a leetle straighter if the deacon had hold of the plough."

The deacon agreed that it was "a sin and a shame to see a fine piece of land like that so neglected;" and finally concluded to see if "the squire wouldn't let him have it on shares."

Mr. Lyndsay had begun to perceive his unfitness for the task he had undertaken, and gladly concluded an agreement with deacon Peters to take the whole farm on shares, except the garden and a little orchard of a dozen trees near the house.

Mr. Peters was an honest man, and the family lived in far more comfort from the time of this arrangement. But the semblance of occupation being thus removed, Mr. Lyndsay's mind failed more rapidly, until, at the time we speak of, he had sunk into childishness. Quiet and cheerful, living again the thoughts of his boyhood, as if no lifetime had intervened, he wandered about the haunts of those early days; and his imagination, seemingly freed by the relaxed grasp of the corporeal nature, revelled

in the poetic dreams of the past, and in vivid anticipation of the future, whose dawn was fast approaching. Things of his later life he vainly endeavored to recall, and would lament that memory walked with him no more.

"She has left me," he said, "because my feet tread the verge of that land where all things are forgotten: it is an enchanted land, 'where the air is heavy and causes sleep;' but while I slumber there, memory shall watch above me, and in the dawnings she will stand by my side clad in radiant garments, and together we shall enter the gates of Paradise to wake in light for ever."

In this quiet hope of the last rest—in this glorious hope of the bright hereafter, the life purchased so dearly for us, in the peacefulness with which the old man contemplated his departure—Julia felt the feverish impatience of her spirit calmed.

They went home together through the still woods, where the fallen leaves rustled beneath their steps—where the maple's trembling

hands still clasped the few remaining rubies of his broken diadem; where the crimson berries of the dogwood dropped one by one, like the beads of a rosary, as the winds wandered moaning through the forest aisles; where the summer flowers lay dead by the brookside, and pale mists hovered like white-robed spirits over their chill resting-place; where, amid the stillness of the autumn death, arose the clear voice of the brook, telling of the resurrection of spring—of rivers of life ever flowing—of heaven's eternal summer.

Ere the spring returned, Julia wrote to her cousin:—

"Come to us, dear Marion; come if you possibly can. Mamma has even urged me to ask you, although she does not see, what is very evident to me—that poor papa is fast failing. He says he is well, and does not suffer, and will not have a physician when there is nothing apparently the matter. Could you persuade Dr. Wood to accompany you? I know his kindness, and his regard for us all. Mamma would be very glad to see him, and he will tell us to hope or fear.

"I have used a wrong word: great as would be our grief, there is no fear in such a departure as his. He has everything to rejoice in—nothing to regret.

"His life has not been a happy one. I have understood this since we have been here; for although his health and mind have been impaired by past anxieties, he has enjoyed more peace than in all the years I can remember of his previous life.

"There is a general but unobtrusive kindness manifested towards him by all the neighbors—cordial, almost compassionate greetings from those persons we meet in our long walks; and I have often been surprised by the genuine refinement of feeling that sometimes appears in the very roughest (externally) of our people.

"I fear, Marion, that there is something plebeian in me, for after all mamma's training and injunctions, I cannot turn coldly from such homely kindnesses; and in the quaint stories that the old people relate for papa's amusement, I take real pleasure, besides that of seeing him entertained.

"We have been much together this summer, and have had many happy days; but, Marion, I fear they are drawing to a close. Do come, and come quickly."

Such an appeal was not to be resisted. But when Marion and Dr. Wood reached Montiluna, they found Mr. Lyndsay incapable of recognising them; and but a few days elapsed ere the old man was laid at rest beneath the trees that shaded his first home and his last.

Poor Mrs. Lyndsay! For the first time in her life, her energy forsook her. She had so

disbelieved the signs of her husband's decline, that the event came upon her with overwhelming force. She was utterly incapable of making any exertion, or of giving any directions for the arrangement of her property; and Dr. Wood, after consulting Julia and Marion, decided to let the place to Mr. Peters, and to remove Mrs. Lyndsay with Julia to Mrs. Sumner's.

It was a cold, dark morning in early spring when Mrs. Lyndsay left the scene of (as she considered it) her humiliation; the home she might have made bright; the grave of him she might have made happy—but for her worldly spirit.

Yet neither relief nor interest, hope nor regret, animated her face. Cold and apathetic, she endured rather than accepted the attentions of her companions, no tear or smile breaking the stillness of that stony calm.

A winter journey was then a serious undertaking, involving weariness, discomfort, often danger. She felt nothing, cared for nothing,

and her friends could only hope that time might bring a relief that seemed unattainable by other means.

But an event had already taken place that completed the sad chain of consequences proceeding from her mistaken life.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST OF EARTH.

"We lingered long by that cold grave side,
While back to the world swept the funeral tide,
Far from the death-beach it ebbed away,
Nor missed from its bosom a drop of spray.
A drop of spray.

And must dust absorb it? Ah, no, if she shone
Amongst Christ's jewels, a precious stone,
When judgment shall open the grave's rough shell,
She may be a pearl,—but we cannot tell,
We cannot tell."

THE day after Marion and her uncle had left New York, Frank Enfield called at Mrs. Sumner's on his way down town.

"Aunt Amy, where is Oscar?" he asked.

"Gone, Frank, this half-hour."

"I am very sorry; I hoped to have reached here before he left. There is news in this morning's paper that, I think, will make it necessary for some of us to go to New Orleans."

"What is it, Frank? Is Matilda?—has anything happened?"

"It is about her husband: but you will read quicker than I can tell you, Aunt Amy. Here is the paper."

With a thousand wild conjectures hurrying through her mind, Mrs. Sumner took the paper; but the paragraph, though not long, seemed to declare a stranger mystery than she had even imagined.

"A most extraordinary domestic mystery has been brought to light, and the whole occurrence is of so singular and painful a nature as to have caused the greatest excitement in our city to-day.

"Two Frenchmen, named Brousseau and De Brie, have, for the last three or four years, kept a gambling house, on —— street, which has become somewhat noted for the high play carried on there, and of late for some suspicions that there was a very ingenious and extensive system of fraud carried on by the two accomplished partners. At length, measures were taken to bring this to a test; and, last night, a number of our citizens, accompanied by officers, disguised, and furnished with proper warrants, to be used, if necessary, joined the usual party in these rooms.

"All was conducted with apparent fairness, until a late hour in the evening, when many of the young men had drunk enough

to render them very unfit to play against such opponents. We have not, as yet, the full particulars; but the scheme was discovered, and in the confusion that ensued De Brie managed to escape from the room.

"An officer rushed after him, but before overtaking the fugitive he heard the sound of a pistol-shot, and proceeding in the direction thus indicated, he found the wretched De Brie in his wife's room—a corpse: he had died by his own hand.

"But the strangest part of the story remains to be told. The wife of the dead man was a lady from the North, of great beauty and accomplishments, and when the house was first opened was the great attraction, although she was never seen in the saloons —receiving her acquaintances in her own part of the house; the play being at first private, and the character of the occupants unknown for some months.

"Suddenly she disappeared. It is said that a brain fever had resulted in hopeless insanity. Now, it is discovered that the unhappy lady has been for the past two years a close prisoner in her own house, the whole story of her illness being a fabrication to account for her disappearance.

"What all this means has not yet been ascertained; a thousand rumors are afloat; but a few days will probably clear up the mystery. Brousseau is in prison."

Mrs. Sumner looked up horror-stricken.

"Poor Matilda!" she said, "this is a terrible explanation of her silence."

"Aunt Amy, don't you think some of us ought to go to her?"

"Yes, indeed; I will go myself, as her mother cannot."

"Indeed, dear mother," exclaimed Helen, "you are not able to bear the journey; let me go and Cornelia, and we will bring her back with us."

"That will be best," rejoined Frank. "Oscar or I will go with you; there is a packet to sail this week. I will go down town, Aunt Amy, and see Oscar and my father, and will be back as soon as I can, and tell you all about it. Meantime, girls, pack your trunks, and we will see!"

Off went Frank.

Mrs. Sumner's health was by no means equal to such a journey, and she soon perceived the necessity of suffering Helen and Nela to go. There would not be time to send word to Mrs. Lyndsay, even were Mr. Lyndsay in a state to spare her or Julia. Matilda must come home at once; and if there were any truth in this

story of her imprisonment, she would need care lest the rumored evil should become real.

Frank and Oscar came back together, and reported that a packet would sail in two days. They had taken passage for the two girls and Oscar, and were ready to aid in any preparations.

These were soon completed, and on the third day from the receipt of the sad tidings, Mrs. Sumner saw her children set out on their journey of consolation.

* * * * * *

Matilda, Baroness De Brie, sat alone in one of the *suite* of rooms she had occupied for two years. Celeste had just left her—Celeste who would do anything for the mistress she had learned to love so dearly, except to set her free. She, poor girl! was almost too subjected even to think an opposition to her master's will; yet her affection for Matilda had enabled her, in many ways, to alleviate her captivity.

Indeed, Matilda scarcely seemed to care for freedom. Persuaded as she now was that her family had given her up, she knew of no asylum

to which she could flee; and she had sunk into a sort of quietude that was less resignation than apathetic despair.

But on this night old memories were awake. It was Julia's birthday. Just six years ago the party was given that had really sealed her fate. Six years ago she had stood at the headwaters of destiny—a touch, the turn of a pebble, would decide the course of the springing fountain. She had turned it—whither.

It was a bitter thought, and she sought a brighter vision. She recalled the scenes in which she had taken part; she saw herself and Julia, in all the gladness of youth and the light of hope. She saw the merry groups passing before her eyes, and wondered that so much was clear to her *now*, that *then* was concealed; and again and again her eyes seemed to glide down the rays that streamed from that happy past, to their dark resting-place in the gloomy present.

She was roused near midnight by a rapid step approaching the door. In the room where

she sat was an antique escritoire, with a folding front, which De Brie kept locked, and where he kept some private papers. Still he rarely used it; and she was surprised to see him enter the room and utter an impatient exclamation, as he raised the dimly burning lamp, open the cabinet, snatch from one of the inner drawers something—she did not see what—and flinging up the front, which closed with a spring, rush out of the room.

She did not know whether he saw her; probably not, as her dress was dark, and she sat in the shade of the window. If he had it would have made no difference, as, in their infrequent meetings, he rarely spoke to her. She turned again towards the window, but was startled by a crash; the spring of the escritoire had not caught perfectly, and the fold had fallen forward.

But the jar had thrown open a secret drawer. What was that lying white in the full ray of the lamp?—a package of letters—her own name, in a dear familiar hand.

One moment, and she had seized the precious treasure. Weariness, listlessness, were all gone. Was this their forgetfulness! Letter after letter, full of love, of tender reproaches for her silence, of yearning over the absent one; letters from father, mother, sister, aunt, and cousins. She turned again to the drawer; they were hers, why should she not take them? As she gathered them up in her trembling hands, she saw beneath them her own writing. There were all the letters she had written with such sad tears. Some of the seals were broken: a very few. Nearly all remained as she had sent them. Love's justification was complete, and with pain that was not all grief she sat down to peruse the record of so many months. She read eagerly, thirstingly, here and there, striving to grasp all at once, yet lingering over some expression of affection, or turning back to the dear names so long unseen. At last she arranged them in order, and began to read them regularly through.

Dawn was approaching, and, absorbed as she

was in her employment, she became aware of loud voices and cries in the room beneath her. Sounds as of objects falling heavily. A pause. Then a rush of many feet. Then one in the corridor, and her door burst open, and De Brie rushed in. He started to see his wife sitting there, and as she sprang up in alarm her letters fell from her lap.

"Yes, it is all over at once," he muttered; and, striking her back as she moved towards him, he passed on to the escritoire, snatched a loaded pistol from one of the shelves, and the next instant lay dead at her feet.

The doorway filled with eager faces, which, even in their haste, paused at the sight that met them. The smoke of the pistol clearing away, showed them the corpse of the man they sought, with the weapon yet clasped in the hand; and over him, in her dark robes, with her eyes gleaming and her face pale with horror, her arm still raised as to ward that blow, like an avenging Fate, stood his injured wife.

All had passed with such breathless haste:

the stillness, the rush—a moment, and all was over. The crowd drew back: one or two entered the room. They raised the body silently, as silently she pointed to the couch; and when they laid him down she stood at the head gazing down on him who had been her husband.

Yes, all was indeed at an end now. The scheming, turbulent, ambitious spirit gone; his designs unfulfilled; her fetters all broken. Of this she thought not—resentment could find no place there. Her soul was filled with awe, and sorrowful compassion. Were all those varied gifts, those brilliant powers of mind, given in vain, perverted and misused, to end—thus!

A gentleman approached her and touched her hand.

"Come away, lady," he said, kindly, "this is no place for you."

Mechanically she suffered him to lead her into the next room; but scarcely had he given her into the hands of Celeste, when a long, deep fainting fit came to the relief of the overtasked brain and heart.

For days and weeks she lay passive in the languor of fever. Mr. Artaud now showed that his interest in her was genuine, by taking the superintendence of her affairs. He provided for her comfort; and finding the necessary addresses on the letters she had dropped, he wrote to her friends at the north.

These letters were not received until after her cousins had begun their journey; but they comforted Mrs. Sumner with the knowledge that poor Matilda had some one to look to in her desolation.

The travellers had no difficulty in finding Matilda on their arrival; and they were touched by the kindly feeling everywhere expressed towards her, as enough of her story had transpired to prove to every one that she had been the victim, not the accomplice, of De Brie and Brousseau.

Glad, indeed, was the meeting between those long-parted friends; and for a few days she rallied, as though they had truly brought new life to the sinking frame. But it was too late;

her short wintry day was over, and this bright beam of joy served but to gild its close.

Helen and Cornelia looked with wonder on the change wrought by sorrow on their gay and thoughtless cousin.

The "still small voice" had been heard in the dark hours, and she had welcomed its teaching; she had tasted of the fountain of life, and the springs of earth had no more charm for her. Gentle, humble, and resigned, she received gratefully the love and attention of her cousins, and her kind old friend; and wist not that they treasured as holy lessons the words that flowed from her pallid lips.

A few weeks and all of earth was over for her, and the peace of her ransomed spirit seemed breathed into the hearts of her mourners, as they bade her a last farewell.

They felt that life, for her, could have no better ending. She had learned its deepest lessons. It were well that she should depart, and be at rest for ever.

CHAPTER XVI.

FRUITION.

"I love thee, oh I love thee, is all that I can say,
It is my vision in the night, my dreaming in the day;
The very echo of my heart, my blessing when I pray;
I love thee, oh I love thee, is all that I can say."—HOOD.

IT was a lovely evening at that fair season when spring is blushing into summer; when, crowned with roses, the young year stands, the shadows of the waving boughs amid her dusky tresses, as she gazes with clear eyes into the woodland streams.

When tides of light flow over the fields of grain, and the jewels in that sea are flowers; when long white swathes of cloud lie across the sky, as if in the azure plains of heaven the angels had been reaping their fields of lilies; when, as the day goes down, a glorious vision, as of a transfigured earth, rises to meet the

sunset glory—distant mountains, snowy peaks edged with crimson and gold blue lakes where white fairy boats sail, castles and towers, and beyond all, the sea-green water of a far-off ocean.

It was at such an hour that Nela and Helen sat on the deck of the boat that was bearing them up the Mississippi. Helen was absorbed with a book, and Nela was watching the cloud changes, when she was recalled by a step and voice at her side.

"I cannot be mistaken in supposing that I see Mrs. Enfield once more."

That voice woke an echo that had slumbered for years in Cornelia's heart. A faint flush, gone in a moment, a tremulousness in the first words she spoke, were the only tokens of an agitation, subdued with a woman's quick instinct, but which yet thrilled her heart, as she turned, and the light sparkled in her eyes, though she answered calmly,

"The mistake is a slight one, Captain Vernon; Mrs. Enfield is my sister."

"Your sister!" he said, eagerly; "pardon me for repeating your words; but I was not aware that you had an own sister; and all I heard was that Mr. Enfield had married Miss Boylston. I knew but one."

Oscar now came up, and Helen laid aside her book, glad to renew their acquaintance with one they so highly esteemed; and the friends who had accompanied Captain Vernon on board looked round more than once in surprise at the utter change which had come over their taciturn, almost gloomy companion of the day before.

Captain Vernon was not a man to love lightly; but, once given, his love was unalterable. Thus, when he parted from Cornelia, years ago, though he knew that he could not then marry, perhaps not for many years, and forbore with real heroism to sadden her life with the cares and uncertainties of his own, he yet looked forward to a period when he might be able to claim the love his fidelity would so well merit.

Just as an unexpected accession of fortune seemed to open the path before him, he heard of the marriage, as he supposed of Cornelia.

He was disappointed, in a double sense; for he had fancied he read through the composure of her usual manner indications of a warmer feeling, latent perhaps as yet, but full of bright promise for the future. Had he deceived himself, or was she not all that he had believed her?

How all these doubts vanished at one soft word—one bright glance. Well might his heart bound with happy anticipation.

Time, separation, uncertainty—could cast no shadow over such faith as theirs. In these true hearts love was no selfish passion, but a deep and holy spring of all noble deeds, of all pure affections—a union of perfect trust, of perfect assimilation—a union which life could not weaken nor death annihilate, for time and for eternity. In this bright fruition we leave them.

Mrs. Lyndsay lingered but a few months,

and Julia found a happy home with her aunt Amy.

Helen was too devoted to her art to think of marriage; and Matilda's sad fate had taught Julia to fear it as a bondage. They remained to brighten the declining years of the beloved aunt and mother.

And she has her reward: she is happy in her children. Unspoiled by prosperity, their hearts are tender and true; and she knows that if adversity should come it will be met, as it has been before, bravely and cheerfully, looking ever forward to the light beyond.

THE END.

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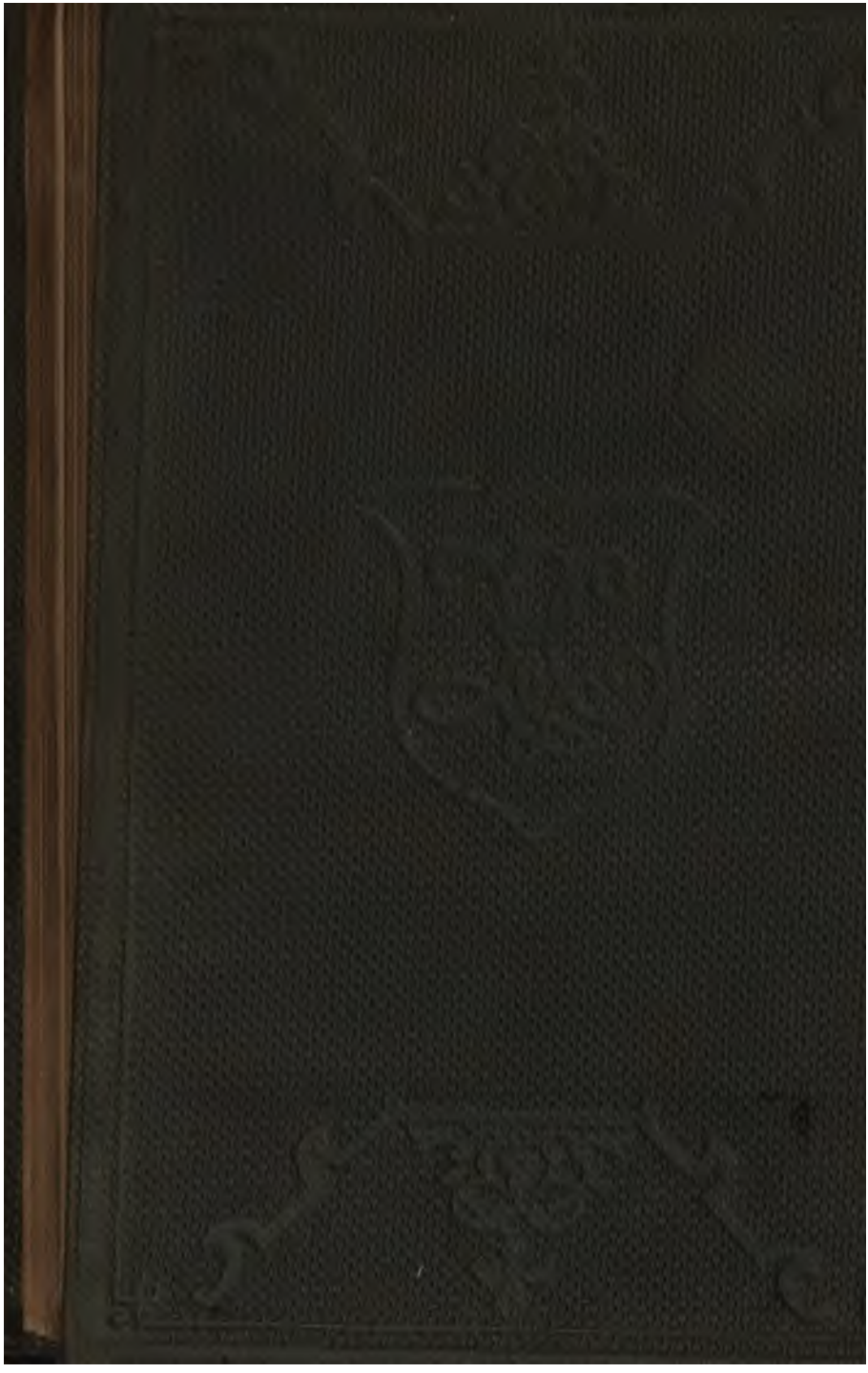
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